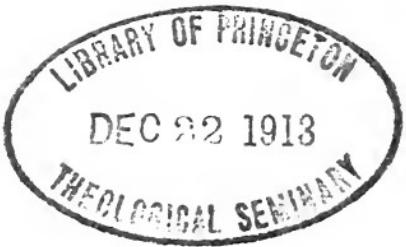


THE
TRAINING OF CHILDREN
IN RELIGION

GEORGE HODGES



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The training of children in
religion

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✓ BY

GEORGE HODGES, D.D.

DEAN OF THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
AT CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS



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THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN IN RELIGION

CHAPTER I

THE SECURING OF INDEPENDENT GOODNESS

 HAVE in mind the religious education of children up to the age of fifteen years. After that, whether with or without the admonition of their elders, they will educate themselves.

My purpose is to bring to the assistance of fathers and mothers and teachers such suggestions, out of experience and books, as may enable them with a clear mind and a fair result to perform their responsible duty. That duty, as they know well enough,

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is only begun when they maintain their children in sound health of body, and is only carried a little further when they make them learn their lessons at school. Even good behavior is not the end of their proper achievement. Their purpose as to morals is insufficiently accomplished when they secure respect and order and obedience.

For moral behavior may be a matter of dependence or of independence. The virtues may be imposed on children by superior strength of will, or by an efficient system of reward and punishment. Children may be good because they have no chance to be bad. The conditions under which they are brought up may provide them with shelter and protection and continual watchfulness. They may live in the unfailing presence of parents or nurses or teachers. They may not know a moment in which they are left to their own free devices. Their choices may be determined for them. The goodness of children, under circumstances such

as these, is an unknown quantity. It may be only a dependent goodness.

Sometimes when a child thus nurtured grows into youth and comes at last into his inevitable independence, and his own true will appears, his parents are much surprised. Thus and thus he did when he could not help himself, but now he is revealed. The father and mother cannot understand how their son who was such a quiet and gentle lad at home, and whose marks for conduct were so good in the private school, can behave at college as if he had a devil. They are rather inclined to lay the blame upon the devil. But the probable reason for the difference is in the fact that the boy had only a dependent goodness. The obedience which he showed was of their imposing, not of his own choosing. They controlled him, but they did not educate him. They did not bring him up so that he freely and naturally and gladly preferred the good.

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The difference between a dependent and an independent goodness is due only in part to the method of training. The method may be changed, and the child may be given his own choice earlier in life, and still the results may be disappointing. His parents or teachers may try the experiment of leaving him unwatched, and may find by experience that the experiment does not work. It may seem necessary to choose between dependent goodness and independent badness. And in the face of such a choice it may seem wise to choose goodness, under any conditions. There is also a feeling, which is fairly founded on human nature, that if a child can be kept good up to the age of ten or twelve, even by main force, there is a fair chance that he will stay good. The parable of the twig and the tree seems to apply: as the twig is bent so shall the tree be inclined. Not only, however, is the result uncertain, but there is a radical defect in the process.

Independent goodness, such as we desire for our children, proceeds not simply from custom but from motive. An educative process is defective which provides no more than forms and precedents, and accomplishes no more than the formation of habits. The forms and precedents and habits are of avail only so long as the conditions remain unchanged. The youth thus educated is not competent to adjust himself to new conditions, nor is he secure against temptation. Temptation introduces at once a new situation with which he has not been accustomed to deal. He has been shielded against temptation. There is little within him which comes now to his rescue and reinforcement.) Indeed, the fact that he has been in the habit of doing as those who are about him do, operates now to incline him to conform himself to new associates. The good habits gained him the approval of his parents, his teachers and his schoolmates; but now approval in the wholly different

situation in which he finds himself, will be gained by the bad habits. A dependent goodness will be easily supplanted by an equally dependent badness.

What is needed is a constant motive. The lad who can be trusted in the midst of temptation is not only accustomed to be good, but desires to be good. That is his own, honest, independent wish. That is his ideal. His tastes, his interest, and his will are all that way. In the curriculum of the home or of the school, in the learning of the lessons of life, he has graduated out of the class in which the text-book is the Commandments into the class in which the text-book is the Beatitudes.

The Commandments and the Beatitudes differ not only in the form of statement, wherein the old law is negative and the new is positive, but in the spirit which this change of form represents. The Commandments are prohibitions, but the Beatitudes are ideals. "See," cries the Master of the

Soul, "here is the excellent life, here is true happiness, here are the ideals of fine, strong, free manhood." Then one who has said to himself: "I must not turn to the right, I must not turn to the left, on I must go, one foot after the other, in this prescribed path," lifts up his eyes, and there are the shining hills, there is his goal, his destination, his haven, his great achievement. There is the place where he would be. And he says: "By the grace of God, I will attain that height." Thereafter, he journeys with a new purpose, a new hope and a new courage. He looks up and not down. He has a new motive.

This essential motive, this interior and sincere choice, is not effected by prohibition, or protection, or admonition, or by any instruction in ethics. The principles of ethics appeal to the understanding, and give support to prudence, but they are of slight avail against the misleadings of emotion. The only force which can persistently with-

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stand a wrong emotion is a right emotion. In the Puritan Revolution, Cromwell perceived that the royal troops were upborne by the emotion of chivalry: it gave impetus to their charge and strength to their arms. He saw that he must oppose to them a force of men also upborne by emotion, who to the might of their muscles should add a great enthusiasm of their souls. So he recruited the Ironsides, who were not only fighting men but praying men, and who were intent not only on a battle but on a cause which consecrated all their valor. He brought into the field a new emotion.

The defect of ethics as a force in the development of conduct is its lack of this quality of emotion, and its consequent failure to provide youth with an independent motive. It is one thing to understand the difference between good and evil, but an altogether different thing to refuse the evil and to choose the good. Indeed, the understanding is so easy as to suggest the definition of

ethics as the science of what everybody knows, expressed in language which nobody can comprehend. But to do right is another matter: even as there are many students of philosophy, but mighty few philosophers. A consideration of ethical values provides details for conduct, and is corrective and necessary; but it does not furnish a motive. This is best supplied by religion.

I concern myself, for this reason, with the training of children in religion, not in ethics. I am dealing here not with honesty or purity, not with the speaking of the truth or with the keeping of one's life unspotted from the world, so much as with the interior purpose, ideal, motive, emotion which shall work itself out into all these forms of conduct. The proposition with which I begin is that the conditions of human nature are such as to make it necessary for us to train our children in religion. The result of right religion is that one of

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his own will desires to be good. His monitor is within. He may be removed from the domestic restrictions of his youth, and placed in circumstances which give him freedom to choose both his companions and his manner of life. That will make no difference. He is his own master, and wherever he goes he carries his own standards and ideals. Or rather, he serves a Divine Master in whose presence he lives continually, no matter where he goes. He waits for no external obligation. He can be fully trusted.

CHAPTER II

THE CONDITIONS OF HUMAN NATURE

THATEVER mistakes have been made in the training of children in religion, they have been due for the most part to a lack of consideration for the conditions of childhood. Sometimes there has been a serious defect in the understanding of religion itself, as in the days when the doctrine that children are "conceived and born in sin" was taken to mean that they all belonged to the devil, until by their own voluntary act and choice they transferred their allegiance to the Lord. But commonly the religion has been good enough. The teachers of it have failed to take advantage of the conditions of human nature.

One of the conditions of human nature

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is that we respond naturally to observation. We do our best when we are seen.

This is at the heart of those careful methods at home and at school by which children are provided with unfailing companions and counselors. Thus far, such methods are in accordance with the facts of human life. Not only does observation prevent much which is wrong, but it stimulates to excellent action. When Roger Williams said of the Rhode Island Indians that they would endure torture without a murmur but that they cried when they had the tooth-ache, he indicated the access of fortitude which comes with an admiring audience. The man at the stake was conscious that he was under observation, and he conducted himself in the great manner of a hero. But the toothache was another matter. Nobody cared whether he endured it well or ill.

We are so made that we are helped by being watched. One reason why our words

are so much better than our thoughts is that our words by becoming audible are subjected to the observation of our neighbors. If mind-reading should become a general accomplishment, it would have a reforming effect upon the processes of our minds. We would abstain from thinking the things which we now abstain from speaking. One reason why young men and women who have lived reputably in a country town find the influences of city life not only relaxing but degenerating is that the conditions of the city emphasize the individual rather than the social side of life. In the country everybody is under observation. No neighbor can conceal from his fellow-citizens his neglect to go to church, or his tendency to stay out late at night. But in the city, we may not know our neighbor's name. His concerns are his own. He is free to follow his own will. Out he goes and in he comes without regard to us. It is in the city that the man is found who says: "I in-

cline to Cain's heresy, I let my brother go to the devil in his own way."

The method of betterment by observation fails because of the difficulty or impossibility of maintaining it. Children cannot be watched or counseled or protected forever. They leave their home or their school and begin to make their own way in the world, and the sudden change brings with it a great moral danger. What is needed is some kind of continuance of the helpful conditions under which life has previously proceeded. This is provided by religion. For one of the fundamental facts of religion is the universal presence of God. The child goes out of the presence of his parents and teachers, but if he has been educated in religion he knows that he abides always in the presence of God. He is under the observation of God.

This consciousness of the constant observation of God is that "fear of the Lord" which is defined as the beginning of wis-

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dom. The wise man who would set the feet of children in the right way, and teach them lessons which they may use for strength and direction as long as they live, starts with this religious truth: "Come, ye children, and hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (God, who made us and all the world, is forever present with us, and is aware of all our acts and words and thoughts. He is concerned about us, individually. None is too young or insignificant to be beyond His interest.) He who knew more about God than anyone else who ever lived said that the very hairs of our heads are numbered by Him, and meant that God cares for us even to the least details. In the midst of all the innumerable multitudes of men, God cares for us as if He and we were alone in the whole world. The initial purpose of religion is to impress this upon the minds of children. This is a contribution which religion, and religion only, makes to conduct.

It is plain that such a consciousness of the presence of God will deter the child from evil. For it is of the nature of God that He desires us to be good. The child understands, easily enough, that his parents wish him to be good: that is brought to his attention a hundred times a day. He receives naturally the statement that God, his Father in heaven, desires him to be good. Gradually, he carries the habit of doing right in the presence of his parents into the habit of doing right in the presence of God. When he is tempted to do wrong, he says: "Thou God seest me." And the thought gives him an access of strength which exceeds the intellectual considerations of moral prudence. This may or may not be associated with an expectation of the punishment of God. The consciousness of the presence of God is normally enough: I will not offend against the will of God, I will not say or do or even think that which would displease Him, for here He is standing unseen beside me. "O

Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and uprising: Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether."

Also, such a consciousness of the presence of God will urge the child toward excellence. The same instinct which impels him to do well under ordinary observation will be an interior impulse to do well in the sight of God. He will be fortified against the temptation to neglect that which nobody is likely to notice, and will be delivered from what St. Paul calls "eye-service." He will know what is meant by the exhortation: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Thus all that is effective in the idea of moral betterment by observation is brought

forward by religion out of the home and the school into the larger life. The child who has been so trained that the constant presence of God is a sure conviction can be trusted anywhere. He has within him a defense against evil, and an inspiration to do good. His own, native, independent desire is to please God. He has a talisman of protection and strength which no amount of moral teaching can give him. He has been given a spiritual endowment which will make him rich as long as he lives.

A second condition of human nature is our desire for knowledge. We are by instinct inquisitive. As soon as we learn to speak, we begin to ask questions.

If children hate to go to school,—as most of them do at some time in their lives,—the fault is not in the indifference of the child but in the failure of the school to adjust itself to the child's nature. The relation between the mind and the body is even yet imperfectly understood. We are

still affected by the tradition that the child's mind comes to school and brings along his body for the purpose of annoying the teacher. Sometimes the training of the child is hindered by the lack of a point of contact between the lesson and the present life of the child. Sometimes the difficulty is in the walls and the windows and the weather and the impatience of young animals against confinement within doors. Children desire to learn.

In response to this desire, astronomy and geology and biology provide a great amount of material, and answer many questions. There are two respects, however, in which these sciences do not satisfy the mind of youth: they do not give information as to the origin or as to the destiny of life; and they do not reply to the inquirer in terms of personality. But these are matters concerning which the human mind is invincibly curious. In the childhood of the race, the universal questions had to do with origin

and destiny, and the universal answer was in terms of personal will. Thus the Bible begins with an account of the making of the universe and of Man, and comes almost immediately to the phenomenon of death, and explains everything by reference to God. In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth; in due time, God made man in His own image; then men died, one by one, and their bodies returned to the dust from which they were taken, while their souls returned to God who gave them. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

These primitive traditions are confessedly imperfect in detail. It is significant that two accounts of the creation of the world are set down side by side, with no attempt to reconcile their evident differences. One of them pictures the initial condition of the world as a great deep, the other as a great desert. One introduces man late, the other early, into the life of the planet. But

in essential substance the accounts agree, not only with each other but with all knowledge. Gradually the world came into shape, with man as the master of it. These chapters reveal the convictions in which the common mind of humanity found rest. Men were not satisfied till their questions concerning the origin and the destiny of life were answered in terms of the personal will of God.

That which is true of the childhood of the race is true also of the childhood of the individual. The child is occupied in making himself at home here in this new world. A great part of this process consists in interrogation. First, as to the origin of life: whence came the earth and the stars? The child's mind is so constituted that he insists on ultimate answers. He is of the spirit of old Epicurus, to whom his master said: "At the beginning of all things was chaos," and Epicurus said: "And what was before chaos?" The child persistently goes back

and back to the absolute origins. It is true, that after a long series of evasive or negative answers, he becomes discouraged. He finds that neither his teachers nor his parents will tell him, or can tell him, what he wants to know. The answers are not in the books of science. The same difficulty meets him in his researches into the beginning of his own being. The phenomenon of birth makes a deep impression upon him. His questions are avoided by his elders, or are given foolish answers which affront his self-respect. Presently, he picks up some information, a good deal muddled and muddied, in the street. The case is only a little better as to the destiny of life, as to the significance of the tremendous fact of death.

The truth is that the satisfying answers to these elemental questions can be given only in the language of religion. The ultimate reality is God. When St. Augustine said: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it repose in Thee," he declared

a universal human condition. We are not content with explanations which end in laws or forces. We crave a personal universe. As for children, nothing else will satisfy either their imagination or their reason. Their reason impels them to interpret the world according to their own nature, and to find a personal will at the heart of it, as it is at the heart of their own life. And their imagination kindles at the thought of an Unseen Being, master of the stars, yet ministering to their own childish needs. It makes a difference, even with children, whether the universe is conceived as empty, built of stone and hung with clouds and lighted with suns, but uninhabited, or as the vast, immeasurable dwelling-place of God. The look of all things is the same whichever way the child is taught to think about it, but the meaning, the quality, the feel of things is different. It is like the difference between the sensations of a child in a house where people live, and the inde-

finably, but very seriously changed sensations, when the child is in the house alone. It is not necessary to see or even hear the other people; the simple knowledge of their presence brings a reassuring companionship. But if there are no people, if the child is the sole tenant of the great house, the still air is filled with vague alarms.

A third condition of human nature is our quick response to the summons of loyalty.

In the childhood of the race, the world was ruled by heroes. That was the normal order of government. This government was enforced in part by physical strength and valor but still more by the might of admiration and enthusiasm. Men obeyed and followed because their hearts were filled with loyalty to their leaders. For good and ill, this is one of the most potent of emotions, and still sways the lives of men. It dominates the thoughts of growing children. When they begin to read, they incline naturally to the stories of ro-

mantic heroism. These fit psychologically the period of life in which they are living. The normal child is an adventurer. He is the descendant of old warriors, and brigands, and pirates, and discoverers, and in the spring of the year, and the spring of the years, their blood moves in his veins. He descends with them into the back yard as into an arena, and proceeds to undertake the tasks of chivalry. He brings the heroes with him out of the books, and together they sail and fight and explore lands unvisited. He endeavors, according to his might, to be like these mighty men of old. The sword of lath is but a faint reminder of Excalibur, but it is a symbol, nevertheless, of all the knightly virtues.

Sir Arthur Helps said wisely that a supreme need of nations is a true idea of greatness; and the saying applies as well to individuals. It applies with special force to children who are in the time of life when they may not only dream great things but

may honestly expect to do them. Such an expectation is a determining force. It makes a difference. But it is commonly aroused not by a proposition or a general principle, nor even by a noble cause, but by the embodiment of these things in a person. Personality is the vernacular in which ideals speak to children.

It is therefore a matter of serious importance to provide children with the proper materials of personality out of which they may make the ideals which shall determine their lives. This is done in part by the daily companionship of playmates, in part by the acquaintances whom they meet and the friends whom they make in books, but also by the actual great persons of history in whose steps, though at remote distances, they follow. It is plainly not enough that these heroes be persons of notable valor, and useful patterns in times of war. This is an admirable quality, and comes in good play even in days of the most

serene and even monotonous peace, but it is in large measure a virtue of the body. Still less is it enough that the child's ideals shall be persons of eminent success in business, whereby they make immense fortunes, and go about in automobiles and steam yachts. This is mighty pleasant, but it has to do with the outside of life. What we wish is that the persons of whom our children think most often and most admiringly shall be inspiring patterns of high character. We want them to be independent of occasions and of possessions, not waiting for wars, and not consisting in the abundance of the things which they are able to buy with money. We want them to wear the jewel of courtesy and to be filled with the spirit of service. We would have them not only virtuous but unselfish, going about doing good, giving their strength not to destruction but to construction, overcoming great difficulties, and making the world better. We would have their lives show not only

certain results but certain qualities, as gentleness, forbearance, consideration, appreciation of the beauty of the world and devout recognition of the world unseen.

We are in no doubt whatever in our choice between Napoleon Bonaparte and Francis of Assisi as companions for our sons of twelve or fifteen years of age. We choose the saint. We choose the cheerful, tender, loving, praying and serving saint. As for results, Francis made deeper and more lasting changes in Europe than Napoleon. But in the quality of the two lives there is no comparison. In detail, we would not have our son follow either of these patterns: we would not have him either an emperor or a friar; we would not have him put upon his head either the three-cornered hat of Napoleon or the cowl of Francis. But in the ordinary walks of life, in the sort of days which he is likely to live, we would be glad to have him a gentleman and a Christian. We would like to see

him growing into that fine spirit, developing that strong and delicate quality of life, and devoting himself to the general good.

But this kind of character grows most naturally in the soil of religion. The most delicious wines grow in certain vineyards. The difference between them and other wines is not in the grape-stock which is planted, nor in the process which is used in the making: it is in the ground. The same grapes treated in the same way in other soils will yield inferior results. The determining quality is in the soil. So it is with men. Children may be trained according to the same ethical processes, given the same admonition and instruction, but with diverse results according to the presence or absence of religion. When Thoreau said that the finest of arts is to improve the quality of the day, he indicated the indefinable difference which we feel between one good person and another. It is not in

conduct but in quality. Of course, the influences of religion are so subtle that they are likely to fail in many cases. The Parable of the Sower illustrates that. But when the conditions are right they produce saints.

A main factor in this accomplishment is the personality of Jesus Christ. The distinctive contribution of Christianity to the progress of the world is the life and death of Jesus Christ. The point of contact between Him and the individual is the spirit of loyalty. The most remarkable exhibition of this spirit is in the fact of martyrdom. Men and women and even children, out of pure love for Jesus Christ, have endured tortures even unto death. He has thus evoked an enthusiasm and an allegiance which surpasses immeasurably the devotion paid to other heroes. It is plain in history that there is that in Him which calls forth the entire and self-effacing devotion of the soul. And this is true in a

lesser degree in ordinary life. The spirit of loyalty which makes a child endeavor to be like some great person about whom he has heard, and which impels a child to say to himself: "I cannot do this or that because my father and mother would not like it," produces a similar allegiance of admiration and of affection to Jesus Christ. To develop such a loyalty in childhood is to render a service of inestimable value. It is to do the greatest thing that can be done for the shaping of character.

These conditions of human nature—the response to observation, the desire for knowledge and the instinct of loyalty—must be taken into account in any intelligent training of children. They are fundamental factors in the problem of moral education. The importance of religion in the solution of this problem appears in the manner in which it meets and satisfies these conditions. It is necessary to the health of the soul.

CHAPTER III

DOMESTIC THEOLOGY: I. THE BEING OF GOD

HALL parents who are engaged aright in the welfare of their children are called to practice not only domestic medicine but domestic theology. They are to minister both to the health of the body and to the health of the soul. In the progress of each of these ministries, occasion may arise for specialized, expert advice. When the child shows signs of serious and complicated physical disturbance, the immediate thing to do is to send for the doctor. And when the child gives evidence of serious intellectual or moral difficulty in matters of religion, which the best endeavors of the family wisdom do not satisfactorily meet, the thing to do is to call in the

minister. But there are daily troubles which yield readily to domestic treatment. Such treatment implies a dealing with the health of the soul and of the body under unscientific conditions.

For assistance in the practice of domestic medicine there are books enough, but there seems some lack of similar assistance in the field of domestic theology. What is needed is some elementary statement of the fundamentals of religious truth such as may serve in the first place for the clarifying of the minds of unscientific parents, and in the second place for the transferring of ideas to the minds of children. It is true that children are not interested in theology on its formal or philosophical side; they are, however, profoundly interested in those aspects of theology which touch their own lives. For theology, in its elementals, deals with questions such as all natural children ask. They put these questions to their parents. The purpose of this and several suc-

ceeding chapters is to suggest parental answers. Such answers cannot, in the nature of the case, be adequate or final, but they should meet a present need.

Chief and central among the things which a child ought "to know and believe to his soul's health" is the being and nature of God. For religion is human life plus God. It is our common round of duty and pleasure, of work and play, of relation to the visible and tangible world, pervaded by a consciousness of the presence of God, and interpreted by a knowledge of the will of God. It is illustrated by the sense of the sea in the people of a harbor town. All the customary life of the place,—its buying and selling, its eating and sleeping, its streets and houses,—is pervaded by the presence of the sea. The smell of the salt shore is in the air, the sound of the surf is an undertone beneath all other sounds, and the sea shines at the end of the street. The whole of life is flavored by the sea. There

is a dim consciousness of remote distances, of other shores, of the round planet, such as does not easily enter into the minds of those who live in the interior districts where the horizon is bounded by the hills. This indefinable fascination and uplift of the sea is a parable of the divine presence. And one of the initial steps in the education of children is to make them aware of it. They are to be initiated into the great secret of the unseen.

It is essential to religion that one shall be aware that the visible world is not the whole of the universe. In Andersen's story of "The Ugly Duckling," the little ducks, as they come out of the shell, blinking at the light, cry, "What a big world it is!" But the mother duck says, "Oh, children, the world is ever so much bigger than you can see; it extends away beyond the parson's garden." Yes, the world extends beyond the gardens of all the parsons, even beyond the straight fences which enclose the gar-

dens of the men of science, out into space, illimitable and inconceivable. A distinctive difference between the religious person and the irreligious person is that the religious person is aware of their vast environment, and in it perceives God, the Maker and Maintainer of all being.

The consciousness of God, when it comes to a child in the normal way, comes, one might say, out of the air. It is breathed in, like most of the elemental facts of life. That is, the child finds himself in a world where the being of God is taken for granted as naturally as it is in the Bible. The fact is not rested upon any particular process of argument; there is no need to prove it to the child; it is a general possession, a heritage of the race.

The progress of the race is in many ways a story of the progress of the child. The individual lives over again the vast experience of the centuries, and verifies the prophecies of all the past. His infantile

activity, his invincible ambition to climb, is a survival of the day when his ancestors lived in the wild woods. His slow mastery of words indicates the long lessons whereby the race learned the great art of speech,—from imitative sounds to names and nouns, from nouns to adjectives, thence to sentences. So with his natural tastes and interests. He is inquiring, venturesome, selfish, combative, romantic in succession, as the blood of his ancestors,—soldiers and sailors, knights and lovers,—stirs in his veins. He believes easily in fairies and genii, in giants and dragons, and takes naturally to the stories in which these beings play their parts, like his predecessors. He likes as a child what they liked as grown men and women.

The fairy stories may perhaps minister to that period of the child's religious life when he is re-living those primitive centuries in which man's idea of God took the form of polytheism. They fill the world

with the wonder of the supernatural. In the fables, the animals speak, as the serpent speaks in Eden, and the ass in Moab; and the children are no more surprised than Eve or Balaam. That is the proper procedure, in a friendly world. Then the story-telling or the story-reading goes on to the great fairy tales gathered together with pains and learning by the brothers Grimm. Here are the beliefs of ancient peoples, their old creeds and cults, as they were received by simple folk, and handed down to children by their grandmothers. The world is very wonderful: anything may happen any day. Any common road may lead to an enchanted palace where a princess has lain asleep a thousand years. Nothing is so natural as the supernatural. After that, the stories deal with the great heroes, whose adventures are retold by Hawthorne or by Kingsley, and who are the actual gods of the Greek and Roman world,—splendid, marvelous and friendly persons.

Such reading as this provides the religion of the child with the background of the experience of the race. It is in accord with his normal attitude towards the world about him. It appeals to two conditions of his human nature at his age: to his activity and to his imagination. A quiet, restrained, contemplative or philosophical religion, excellent for adults, is as remote from the interest of a child as the transactions of a bank. And an accurate and veracious religion, brought into strict accord with natural law, divested of the miraculous, and applied to ethical behavior, is as impossible for a child as Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason." It is always essential to remember that children are children. They are so to be dealt with even in religion. These extremely vigorous giants and heroes of the old stories are mighty pleasing to the incessantly active child; and their adventures feed his hungry imagination. And in and through them all

there is conveyed to his mind the idea of an unseen environment. Beyond the parson's garden, or over the hill, or at the end of the road, waits a disclosure of the wonder of the world. The child gets in some measure what his forbears got from polytheism. The supernatural mingles with the natural. Sun, moon and stars, winds and thunder, seas and hills, animals and flowers, suggest ideas which are not contained in books of natural history.

As men progressed in religion, and passed out of polytheism, they entered into two quite different ideas of God. One of these was anthropomorphism, the belief that God is like us; the other was pantheism, the belief that God pervades the world.

The first clear thought of God which is possible for a child presents him as the supreme hero and king, a man magnified and perfected and glorified. The details will differ greatly according to the child's surroundings, according to the materials which

are provided by the daily life, but the human quality is essential. In the Garden of Eden, God comes down and walks among the trees in the cool of day, the shadows fall upon Him, and the leaves rustle beneath His feet. Missing Adam, who has hid himself, He calls aloud, "Adam! Adam! Where art thou?" This is very different from the vision of Elijah to whom God comes not in the whirlwind nor in the fire but in a still small voice. It is very different from the pronouncement of the New Testament, "No man hath seen God at any time." But these revelations come later. The initial conception of God for the child, as for the race, perceives God as a man. He is resident in heaven.

Afterwards, we correct this idea by means of considerations drawn from philosophy and theology, but we never get wholly away from it. Nor is it desirable that we should. We think, inevitably, in terms of our own nature. If in the course of time

we lose our way in the maze of metaphysics, there is the one thing of which we are sure. We are certain of ourselves. When we think of the Maker of us and of all things as somehow like us we are using our minds within the conditions and limitations of human nature. We argue truly from the known to the unknown. We begin with ourselves, and advance easily to the proposition that God is the superlative of man the positive. This we affirm concerning our powers and our virtues. Our remote ancestors affirmed it likewise concerning our parts and passions. Even after they perceived that God has no body, such as we have, they continued to speak of Him in bodily terms. Even in the Apostles' Creed, they said that Jesus ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And the idea that God is angry, and in that spirit will execute vengeance on those who have displeased Him, appears with startling frankness in the Book of Revelation.

This difficulty,—if not impossibility,—of thinking of God in other than human form, is to be taken fully into account in teaching religion to children. We are to begin with anthropomorphic theology. What is God like? God is like us. We have never seen Him. Nobody has ever seen Him. But He made us in His own image: He made us like Him. And where is God? God is in heaven, beyond the circle of the sky, among the stars. Nobody knows, indeed, where heaven is. It is the unseen world, beyond the discovery of any telescope. It is the “other” world. It may be presented to the imagination of the child as lying about us somewhat as the world of earth and air lies about the world of water. The ocean is its own world, with its own manner and conditions of life, and they who live in it cannot see out of it. They have no idea of all this world of hills and forests, of factories and towns, of wonder and interest, in which we have our being. Thus about us, in our

lives, may be that celestial world in which God and the angels and the spirits of the departed have their residence.

A great confusion arises in the minds of children when we endeavor to proceed with them from the first idea of God as like us to the second idea of God as present in all the world.

They can understand that God is wiser than any man, and stronger than any man, and better than any man, but yet different from man only as the superlative differs from the positive, but when we tell them that God is present always, with all persons, everywhere, they are perplexed; and the questions which they ask in consequence perplex and baffle us. For in the old time, pantheism went along with polytheism. The rare spirits of the race, philosophers and poets, did indeed perceive a soul of the universe, pervading all things as the soul pervades the body, but people in general thought that the world was full of gods.

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The problem of the divine presence in more than one place at the same time was easy for them. The idea of the oneness of God, with which we must now begin the instruction of our children, makes the omnipresence of God difficult to explain.

Let us say, then, that God is in all life as the sun is in all the earth. There is the sun, shining in the sky, separate from the earth; but all the heat of the earth, and all the light of the earth, and all the growth of living things upon the earth,—plants, animals and people,—are derived from the sun. Without the sun, all this would cease to be; thus they are sustained by the sun. When the stick of wood or the lump of coal burns, the heat and light which come out were stored there in the first place by the sun. In this sense the sun is in all the world: in every tree, in every blade of grass, in every motion made by animals or men. Our whole life is pervaded by the sun. Thus the answer to the question,

Where is the sun? is the statement that the sun is in the sky and at the same time in all the earth. And this omnipresence of the sun is a parable of the omnipresence of God. God is in heaven, and at the same time in all the world. He is with us always, and no matter where we go, because our whole life depends upon God. His life surrounds and pervades our life like the air, like the universal influence of the sun.

Or, we may return to the parable of the mystics and say that God is in the world as our self is in our body. Our self resides in every part of our body. Our life keeps the body alive. Any hurt to any part of the body hurts us. Our self is in all parts of our body at the same time. And our self is invisible and intangible. We cannot see our self any more than we can see God. Thus the unseen God is in the universe. He is in the remotest star and at the same time in the smallest child, as our self is at the same time in our brain and in the tip

of each of our little fingers. He is at the same time in all life and yet distinct from all life, like the self or the soul which is in the body and yet not the body.

Thus to the child's insistent question, Is God here? is He there? is He in the fire? is He in the closet? is He in the tree? we may answer, Yes, God is in the fire or in the tree, like the sun; He is in you and in your friend across the ocean, as your self is in your two thumbs. God is in heaven, as the sun is in the sky, as the soul is in the body, pervading all the world.

The explanation of the omnipresence of God by the parable of the soul in the body suggests also an answer to the difficulty presented by the divine invisibility. How can we know that God is, when we cannot see Him? How do you know, says the teacher, that I am? You cannot see me. You can see what I do. You can see how I use this body in which I live. You can hear what I say. You know that I love you. But all

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the time I myself,—the living being to whom this body belongs,—am as invisible as God. We cannot see God, but we can see what He does. We can see this universe of stars and hills and people, in which He lives as the soul lives in the body.

CHAPTER IV

DOMESTIC THEOLOGY: II. THE NATURE OF GOD

HE first step in a child's theology is a realization of the being of God. He is to understand that God is. The next step is some perception of the relation between God and us. The child is to realize the nature of God.

God made us and all the world. The story of it is in the beginning of the Bible. A little part of the wonder of the world we may see with our own eyes, but more and more of it appears as we study the books of those who have studied the world—books of astronomy, of geology, of botany, books about beasts and birds and fishes. Even with all this put together, we are but beginning to be acquainted with the forms and

the forces, the mysteries and the beauties of the world.

God made the world, not as a carpenter makes a house by gathering together a quantity of materials and placing one upon another; but rather in the likeness of the growth of a tree, which begins with a seed, in which are two wonderful and mysterious things, matter and life. When we ask, Where did matter come from? and, Where did life come from? we can only answer that God brought them into being we know not how. The world began with matter and life, and these two, when they are combined, result in what we call growth. In the tree, by the processes of growth, the matter and life which are in the seed grow into stem and leaves, and trunk and branches, and thus into a great tree. And in the world, the land and the sea, and all things that grow out of them and that live in them, come from the beginning of matter and of life nobody knows how many

hundreds of thousands of years ago. And that is repeated all the time, in all the changing seasons, in all the harvests, and in all birth of animals and of human beings. Matter and life and growth are still mysteries which nobody understands, and they are at the heart of all existence. We put the seed in the ground, but God makes it grow.

Even we ourselves come into being by means of matter and life and growth. Every one of us was once a very tiny particle of matter, less than the smallest seed. In this particle was life. Then it grew in the body of our mother, kept safe there from all harm and nourished as the seed is nourished in the earth. Little by little it grew and came into shape, with body and head and arms and legs, formed day by day under the care of God. By and by, the tiny living particle became a baby and was ready to leave the body of the mother and begin to live in the world. When that hap-

pemed we were born. That was our birth-day. This is how all little children come into the world, according to this wonderful and mysterious working of God.

After the child is thus taught our relationship to God as our Maker, he may be made to understand something of our relationship to God as our Father. Big and little, old and young, we are all children in the great family of God. Not only has God made us and all the world, but He takes care of us and of all things. He has set the sun to give us light by day and the moon and the stars to shine by night. And He feels concerning us as a father feels concerning his children: that is, He loves us, and He wishes us to be well and good and happy, and desires us to live together in peace and pleasantness.

It is, of course, impossible for children to understand fully the occupations or methods or motives of their parents. Such an understanding requires more experience

than they have had. The father goes to his business, the mother administers her household, and much the greater part of these two worlds is wholly beyond the knowledge of the child. To explain them to the child would be to use words which have no meaning, because they are not related to anything which has entered as yet into the child's life. The fact is an easy parable of our inevitable ignorance of God. Our Father's business is beyond the understanding of the wisest of us His children. After all the studies of the sages, we do but know in part, and in small part. For our Father's business is the administration of the universe. It takes in all the operations of light and heat, all the mysteries of fire and flood, of tempest and earthquake, of life and death, and extends to stars which are so far away that the distance from us to them may be measured only by uncountable millions of miles. Sometimes we can answer the question, Why did God do that? but many

times we can no more explain it than a mother can explain to a child the relation between a holiday in the country and a rise or decline in the price of stocks. The fact of the fatherhood of God carries with it this impossibility of explaining to a child or to anybody else such difficulties as the problem of pain. We may say this or that, more or less wisely, but we must presently confess that we do not know.

It is important that this confession of our ignorance be made as a positive not as a negative statement. That is, it should be taken by the child not as an evasion or dismissal of the subject, or as a disclosure of our lack of learning, but rather as an assertion of the universal fact of mystery. The child is to understand that there is much which lies beyond the most far-seeing sight. The world of the known is in the midst of the world of the unknown as a settler's clearing is in the midst of a forest. That unknown world is as much a part of the

geography of human life as South America or Germany. There it is. The child's unanswerable question is an opportunity for us to make him aware of its existence. The fatherhood of God, relating Him to us as the mature man is related to the little child, reveals this vast tract of method and of motive into which we cannot enter. The honest answer is, "I do not know. I cannot explain it to you, nor even to myself, any more than we can explain to the baby why he cannot have whatever he sees on the table, or why he has to take unpleasant medicine."

Then, to this assertion of mystery, must be added the assertion of providence. The fatherhood of God means not only that we cannot understand God, but that, even when we cannot understand Him, we can trust Him. We may rely upon His infinite wisdom, who knows our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking, and who does that which is right and best.

It is right and best, because He does it. To our confession of ignorance, then, we are to add our confession of faith. We are to say, "One thing I know, and that is that God is our Father. He carries on the world according to His divine providence, according to His infinite plan which I cannot understand, but into which all the perplexities and distresses of our lives fit. It is somehow right. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.' "

Suppose, however, that according to the insistent logic of youth, the questioning does not cease even at this point. The mind of the child is not content with your explanation of the mystery of the world in terms of providence. "How do you know," he asks, "that God is good? In the face of such difficulty as this, in the presence of such a contradiction of the loving providence of God, whence does this assurance come?"

It may be possible to answer this question out of our own experience. We may be able to say that the care and love of God have been plain in our lives: He has led us all the way along, protected us against peril, strengthened us against temptation, brought us into the presence of opportunity and helped us to make the most of it. We may be able to say that we are sure that this present difficulty or trouble is somehow for the best, because we have found that to be true of many troubles and difficulties in the past. At the moment, we cannot understand. How the love of God is present in our sorrow, we cannot see. But God is our wise and loving Father: we know that by experience.

If we cannot honestly say that, then we may base our confidence in the fatherhood of God upon the Bible. When we wish to know about the stars, we study the astronomies; when we wish to know about the flowers, we study the botanies; when we

wish to know about the nature of God, we study the Bible. For the Bible was written by men who knew as much more about God than we do as the astronomers and the botanists know more than we do about the stars and the flowers. And the Bible is a record of the experience of hundreds of years. This experience, as explained by these men, shows that God loves us, that He cares for us as a father for his children, and that in His providence all things work together for our good.

This assurance of the love of God is confirmed by all the beautiful and happy experiences of life, and may profitably be associated with them. The child is to be made to feel that he lives in a world of good intention, in a friendly universe. The human instinct, going back to the days of constant contention with savage beasts and hostile neighbors, puts us in fear. We are afraid, by nature, of solitary places and of the dark. The sense of the friendly and

fatherly presence of God helps children to overcome these fears, and thus increases the joy of life by taking away some of its terror. And it deepens and enriches the joy of life by bringing a celestial meaning into all fair skies, and scenes, and pleasant times.

But the fatherhood of God implies not only the divine love but the divine will. Before the child learns to walk or talk, he is made aware of the fact of prohibition. The initial discipline is negative. There are things which he must not touch, or cannot have. One of the first words which he comes to understand is the word "No"; and he begins his lessons in verbs with the imperative "Don't." He perceives that an important part of the difficult art of living consists in the obligation of obedience. His parents are persons who are not content to love him and care for him but who insist on controlling him, much against his will. It is easy for him to grasp the idea that God, our Father in Heaven, has the same

mind towards us, and the same desire to have His will obeyed. The domestic regulations have a new sanction when they are understood to be the will of God. And there is a new interest in obeying them when the child finds that his father and mother are under obedience also.

When the time comes for the beginning of definite instruction, the first lessons will follow the order of the Ten Commandments. These will be learned by heart, and explained according to the child's measure of understanding. The first two commandments are somewhat remote in their statement from our present lives; one being directed against polytheism, and the other against idolatry, and neither of these sins being formally present in our neighborhood. Some information may be given here about the great religions of other lands, where people have not yet learned so much about God as we know, where they still believe in many gods, each having his

own locality or occasion, and where they still make use of images. Even thus early in the child's religion there may be some natural instruction in the meaning of missions: to share our truth with others, especially to share our happiness by extending the gospel, which is the good news that God is kind and loving, and cares, and is our Father. As for us, we keep the first commandment when we realize God, having Him in our thoughts and trying to please Him. And we keep the second commandment when we worship God and pray to Him aright, behaving ourselves reverently, keeping our eyes and our minds from idle wandering.

Most of the other commandments suggest their own interpretation. The seventh comes into relation with childhood in its implication of the sacredness of the body. The tenth means that all evil deeds and words begin as evil thoughts, and that the thing to do is to stop that kind of thinking:

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when such a thought tries to come in we are to put it out by saying No.

After the Ten Commandments, the next lessons in the will of God may follow the order of the Eight Beatitudes. This sequence is topical as well as chronological: first the negative, then the positive; first laws, then ideals. Thus it is that human life proceeds. The Beatitudes, like the Commandments, suggest obvious and immediate applications. Three times the Lord blesses discontent, when He praises the poor, the sad and the hungry, and promises that they shall be satisfied presently. These conditions are the opposite of self-conceit. The blessing is upon the humble-minded, who have no idea that they know it all, but are honestly desirous to improve themselves. They have aspirations and ideals, they are looking forward to something and hoping and working to attain it. Twice He blesses service. Blessed are the merciful, who are engaged in the abo-

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lition of pain. It means physicians, who are contending with disease, and reformers who are fighting the battles of the weak against the selfishness and cruelty of the strong. And blessed are the peacemakers who are engaged in the abolition of strife and hatred. It means lawyers, who are trying to defend people against injustice; and all others, old and young, who endeavor to bring about a better understanding, to stop fighting and to reconcile enemies. Once He blesses sincerity, when He praises the pure in heart. These are they who are without hypocrisy, and who habitually speak the truth. To be faithful to one's own convictions, to be loyal to one's ideals; under difficulty, in the midst of adverse circumstances, in a minority, to maintain the right,—it is one of the most difficult and one of the most heroic of occupations. Once He blesses constancy, when He praises those who are persecuted. They would not be persecuted if they were will-

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ing to submit. Once He blesses meekness. But that virtue does not consist in quietness and silence, in folded hands and down-cast eyes, and in the prudent quality of having no opinion of one's own. The briefest reading in the life of Moses will contradict that common error. The "meekest man," as he was described in the New England Primer, was meek in that he did not contend for his own rights, he was not self-seeking nor self-assertive; but the people over whom he ruled were made aware of his strength of will every day he lived.

These lessons in the Commandments and the Beatitudes may be illustrated by reference to the examples of persons in history or fiction who lived either in obedience or disobedience to them. As a child grows older and reads more, this sort of connection may profitably be established between his books and his religion. Thus the first commandment with its call to the sole worship of God may be illuminated by the story of

Elijah putting the choice between God and the gods to the people on Mount Carmel, and enforcing it by the argument of fire; or by the story of King Midas, as Hawthorne tells it in "The Golden Touch," who made money his god, by caring more for gold than for anything else in the world. The second commandment may be illustrated by pictures of idols in pagan temples, or by idols themselves brought back from pagan countries, or by the adventures of David Livingstone, or by the account of the destruction of the image of Serapis at Alexandria, as it is given by Gibbon in the twenty-eighth chapter of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." For the third commandment, reference may be made to the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, described by Farrar in his "Lives of the Fathers," called upon to revile Christ, and answering, "Eighty and six years have I served Him. How can I speak evil of my King, who saved me?" and choosing rather to be

burned alive than to take that holy name in vain. For the fourth commandment, there is the grim Old Testament story of the man who gathered sticks on the sabbath day, to be balanced by the many accounts in the gospels of our Lord's deeds of mercy whereby He proclaimed the sabbath as a time for all good and kindly service. For the fifth commandment, there is the example of China, oldest of existing nations, and verifying to this day the promise of long life to those who honor their father and their mother. It is a national even more than an individual promise, and bases the stability of nations on the virtues of respect and reverence for age and authority.

The illustrations of the sixth commandment begin with Cain and come down through the blood-stained pages of all the histories to the current daily paper. Nathan rebuked David, and John the Baptist rebuked Herod, for breaking the seventh commandment. Examples of the

breaking of the eighth commandment, beginning with the golden wedge of Achan in the book of Joshua, come down to the newspaper chronicle of our contemporary life. At this moment, in a Chinese prison, lies a scholar and a Christian whose neighbor swore falsely that he was guilty of sedition; such false witness was borne in France not long ago against Dreyfus. King Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and his covetousness led him into grievous crime.

Thus one may go also through the Beatitudes, choosing incidents which bring them out of precept into vital reality. Children who are studying history and literature will be interested to see what examples they can find of these declarations of the will of God. And the search and discovery will serve to impress upon them the truth that goodness and satisfaction and badness and sorrow are bound up together, like the seed and the harvest. It takes some time for this sort of seed to grow, but it grows.

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC THEOLOGY: III. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD

HLL our knowledge of the being and of the nature of God is brought forward into clearness and assurance by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The love and power and will of God are made manifest in the world about us, in the long experience which is recorded in history, and in the course of our individual lives. These are fair premises from which to deduce conclusions. They are the natural evidences of religion. These revelations, however, disclose God as the sun is seen through clouded glass. God is revealed, but somewhat uncertainly and dimly. It is even possible, if one will, to

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maintain that this is a bad and malignant world, and that the Supreme Power under whose direction human life proceeds, is indifferent or careless or hostile. These are the inferences which are readily drawn from the facts when calamities come upon communities, or when disease or bereavement visits the individual. We need, therefore, a more substantial evidence, a more satisfactory and certain interpretation of the meaning of the world. We need a clearer sight of God than we get of the sun through clouded glass.

But suppose there is in the clouded glass a single clear place; through that we look and see the sun. There shines the real sun. Even now we are not beholding the sun in its perfect beauty; it is too remote for that. Even the telescope gives us only a sight of the sun which is but a glimpse of its actual glory. Still, this is a true sight of the sun. Glimpses such as this are given us in the lives of all good men and women, and in

our own ideals of what is fine and worthy and noble. When the prophet Hosea, in the midst of his domestic tragedy, suddenly said to himself, "It must be that God loves His sinful people at least as much as I love my unfaithful wife in spite of her unfaithfulness," he argued reasonably from himself to God. It is plain, the moment we think of it, that God is all that we are at our best, and more infinitely. The fatherhood of God implies all that is contained in our best fatherhood and motherhood and inconceivably more also. The idea that any mother loves her unworthy son more than God does, is absurd on the face of it. Our affection, then, is a revelation of the divine affection. So it is with our ideals of what is just and reasonable and right.

Then we advance to greater clearness when we consider the best persons whom we know and of whom we read in history,—the saints in the calendars, in the histories, and in those calendars and histories which

are kept only in our memory. We may say to ourselves and to our children in the consciousness of excellence like this, "Here is a sight of God. You ask what God is like: He is like such and such a person whom you admire and love, differing only as the sun differs from the candle."

The next advance toward the knowledge of God is to perceive Him in the best of all men, in the flower and ideal of the human race. I mean, of course, in Jesus Christ. In Him our humanity is lifted up into divinity, because in His perfection God is perceived with a new vision. We understand without argument that whatever else and beyond the Maker of the world may be, He is like Christ. Christ interprets to us the moral possibilities of God. Since He lived and taught and died, our idea of God has been greatly changed and enlarged and bettered. We did not know what virtues were inherent in humanity till He showed what a man might be by

our sight of Him. And thus He revealed God. In Him, as in a clear place in the clouded glass, clear as crystal, we see God. The knowledge of Him is, for all the purposes of religion, the knowledge of God. When we would think the truest thoughts of the love and will of God, we think of the manifestation of that love and will in Jesus Christ.

For example, the idea of the self-sacrifice of God comes into human thought with Jesus Christ. The idea of the power of God is common in all religions; and the Old Testament religion maintained also God's tender care for man. But there was a certain withholding of Himself, a certain detachment between Him and us. Most religions have believed in the jealousy of God. He is afraid, they said, that we shall somehow get too wise and strong for Him. Thus even in the beginning of the Bible, He turns our first parents out of the Garden lest they eat of the tree of life and live

forever; and He comes down to see the Tower of Babel and is alarmed at the human power displayed there. "This they begin to do," He says, "and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"; and He takes immediate measures to scatter men and weaken them. In classic mythology, which is the theological belief of the Greeks expressed in the language of symbol, the hero of self-sacrifice is Prometheus, who brings down fire for us from heaven, and therefore suffers forever at the hands of the revengeful gods. But in Jesus, the manifestation of the divine, suffering for us on the cross, God appears as possessing the supreme virtue of self-sacrifice. He gives the ultimate evidence of love. He "so loved the world" as to suffer for our sake.

Thus theology is presented in the Christian religion in terms of personality. This is the manner of the Bible. And it is a manner which appeals to the understanding of

a child. For personality is not only the form in which all the virtues are most attractively and convincingly set forth, but it is also the easiest of all the arguments for truth. Truth may be attained as the result of a long and laborious process of research and of reasoning. It is to be sought that way by those who are qualified to undertake the task. But for most people, and for all children, truth is the affirmation of authority. We believe because we are told the truth by those in whom we confide. We cannot work the matter out, we cannot answer opposing questions, but we can say this: "I go to One whose knowledge exceeds mine a thousand-fold. I am ignorant, and with all my possible studying, I never expect to approach His wisdom. He will tell me what I desire to know. And when He tells me, then I know. My mind is at rest." This is an ordinary procedure in matters of science; where we accept the word of the great sci-

entific masters. It is equally reasonable in religion. Here we resort to the supreme Spiritual Master. To Him we bring our children. As to prayer, as to the fatherhood of God, as to the life to come, as to all our difficulties, we consult Him, and are content. "Lord," we say, "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Also, by means of this personality we bring our knowledge forward into belief. An ancient and familiar prescription of advice to parents about the training of their children in religion counsels them to teach "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." This implies that the health of the soul which we have been considering, is not a matter of knowledge only. It is not effectively secured by the imparting of information. It involves believing. And believing means the individual apprehension of truth. That which we believe,

we have taken into our attention, and then have given it our allegiance, and are now trying to interpret this allegiance in terms of actual application. What is further needed, then, for the soul's health is a realization of these things: of the being of God, as one to whom we are akin, so that we may think of Him as like us; and yet as one who is present in all life, as the sun is present in the world, and the soul in the body; of the nature of God, as our Maker and our Father; of the fatherhood of God, as bringing with it both His love and His will; and of the will of God, as set forth, in successive steps of spiritual progress, in the Commandments and in the Beatitudes. Our problem now is how to make all this real and vital to the child; how to bring the child from assent to belief.

In order to do this, the element of personality is essential. The truth must be embodied. In order to make the truth live in the heart of the child, it must first be

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seen and known living outside the child. The influence of ideas is great, indeed, upon mature and reflective people, but most people and all children are influenced by persons.

Thus we come to the supreme personality, to the embodiment of theology and of ethics, and of all religion, in Jesus Christ.

It is not necessary to perplex the mind of the child with the accurate but difficult statements of the doctrines which are here involved, though it is possible to set forth even the doctrine of the Trinity in a simple way, such as shall convey definite ideas which are true as far as they go. Thus if the question comes,—as it is likely to come in the progress of instruction, or in the course of the Christian Year, where the word Trinity becomes a part of the name of a long series of Sundays,—a sufficient answer for the present is to say that there is one God, one only God, who reveals Himself to us, and deals with us in three

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ways so different that we call Him by three different names. When we think of God as the Maker and Maintainer of the universe, according to whose power all things have their being, we are thinking of Him as the Father. When we think of God as manifesting Himself to us in the history of the race of men, and especially and supremely in the life of Christ, we are thinking still of the same one God, but as the Son. When we think of God as revealing His will in our conscience, and thereby teaching us how to do better, and at the same time helping us to attain the betterment which is thus revealed, we are thinking again of the same God, whom we called first Father and then Son, and whom we now call the Holy Spirit.

The classic statement of the doctrine of the Trinity in its relation to the mind of childhood is in the Church Catechism: "First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me and all the world. Sec-

ondly, in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the people of God.” This is by no means adequate from the point of view of theology. But it is a good working explanation. It will have the effect of taking the idea of the Trinity out of the intellectual clouds and of making a single phase of it mean something to a child. And it is capable of easy illustration. Here is one man who plants a garden and writes a book and loves his family. He is a parable of God, who makes, redeems and sanctifies the world.

Probably the easiest expression for the revealing personality of Jesus Christ is to be found in the name, the “Son of God.” It is used so many times in the New Testament that the ear of the child becomes accustomed to it, and it conveys the essential ideas. It is inadequate as an accurate definition of the person of Christ, and it offered itself in an age of polytheism as a

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polytheistic interpretation of Christianity. Thus according to the theory of Arius, Christ was an inferior God. If, however, we teach our children that Christ was simply the ideal man, we put ourselves and them out of accord with the natural meaning of the whole New Testament. And if we teach them that Christ was simply the eternal God, we put them to confusion in their endeavor to understand the accounts of His human life: was it human in appearance only? or, if it was real, how could God do and endure these things?

Can we do better, under these conditions, than to follow the order suggested by the difference between the two creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene? The Apostles' Creed represents more nearly the intellectual position of the early church. They believed in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. Afterwards, when misunderstandings and con-

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troversies arose, they added the words: "Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God." The children are still in the earlier stages of this theological development. They may be instructed later in the doctrine of the deity of Christ, but at present it may suffice to teach them the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. The formula of this doctrine is in St. Paul's phrase, "God was in Christ." There was Jesus Christ, truly man, subject to our essential human limitations, but God was in Him. God spoke by His voice, and lived in His life, and made Him His representative among us men. God was in His heart. He was the Son of God. The child will know what that means. Out of heaven, where He dwells, God because He so loved the world sent His Son. Thus in the parable of the wicked husbandman the owner of the vineyard, in order to make his will absolutely plain, sent at last his son.

Nineteen hundred years ago, in the midst of the affairs of men, in a land at the end of the Mediterranean Sea, among a people distinguished for religion, as the Greeks were distinguished for art and the Romans for law, appeared the Son of God. We reckon time from that event, numbering the years according as they are before or after the birth of Jesus Christ. Every year, we remember His birth in the festival of Christmas. This offers a natural occasion for teaching children concerning the Person in whom all our religion is embodied. Thus and thus, came the Son of God among us. Nothing can be more beautiful and impressive than the Christmas stories at the beginning of the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. The quiet reading of these pages on some Christmas Eve will be for some children the beginning of the actual consciousness of religion. The Son of God came and lived among men. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten

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Son. The Christmas carols, sung at Sunday-school and at home, the church garnished with the Christmas greens, the service glorified with music, will deepen this impression. The Christmas tree points up to heaven, whence come all good and perfect gifts; and gifts are put upon it in memory of the supreme gift when God gave His Son. The Child in the manger in the Christmas pictures is the Son of God, who in His life and death and resurrection made us to know God.

CHAPTER VI

DOMESTIC THEOLOGY: IV. THE SALVATION OF MAN

DHEN we say that God gave His Son for our salvation, we mean that Jesus Christ came for the health of the soul. For salvation and the health of the soul are the same thing. We are in a state of salvation when our souls are sound and well.

What we ought to desire, then, when we hope to be saved is only remotely connected with hell or heaven. These are the natural sequences of spiritual disease or health. These are the continuation into the world to come of the condition in which we are in the world now present. Our immediate desire should be for present health. If we have that and keep it, all will be well

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for us in all worlds, and we will be happy not only hereafter but here also. The salvation which is promised in the Gospels and which Jesus came to bring, consists in being set free not from punishment but from sin. He came to enable us to overcome our sins. And this He did, in part, by teaching us those truths of the being and the nature of God, in whose knowledge and belief the health of the soul consists. Especially related to our redemption from our sins is His manifestation of the love and of the will of God.

The fact that He came at all was evidence of the love of God. It meant that God cares about us. Jesus assured us of this love of God for us in many ways, but especially by the name which He used when He spoke to God or about Him, calling Him "Father," and teaching us to call Him "Father." This was the heart of all His disclosure of the love of God. It is the standard by which to estimate the truth of

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all that is said of God, in the Bible and since the Bible. Nothing is true of God which is inconsistent with ideal fatherhood.

At the same time, this truth of the love of God is distinctive of Christianity in contrast with all other religions. It justifies the missions of Christianity in other lands. The children are asked to contribute to this mission work, and they ought to do it with intelligence. These missions are supported not because persons who do not hear the Christian gospel will not be saved. That would be to accuse God of being below even our ordinary standard of what is fair. It is impossible that God should so order the universe that great multitudes of people, a majority of all mankind, should perish everlastinglly because they have not accepted a religion of whose existence they have never heard. It is true that this was once believed by Christians; but that fact only shows how slowly true Christianity makes its way into the heart of man.

Neither are the missions supported in order to drive out the native religions and plant the Christian religion in the place of them. That, also, was once, in the intention of many, the motive of missions. We perceive now that other religions have truth to teach us; in all nations those who seek after God find Him; He has not disclosed Himself to us alone. The purpose of missions is to bring as a contribution to other religions this central distinctive truth of the fatherhood of God, and along with it other truths implied in the love of God, and declared in the will of God as we understand it. And this we do to drive out fear and put love in the place of it. It is for the sake of the health of the soul. In other words, it is for the sake of human happiness here and now. We have a source of happiness which we would share with others. It helps us in our sorrow, and strengthens us in difficulty, and makes the whole world pleasant. It is our consciousness of the love of God.

When we ask ourselves how we gain our assurance of this divine fatherly affection, and thus come into possession of this interpreting secret which we wish to communicate to others, the answer is that we know the love of God by the revelation of the Son of God. We take it sometimes in the face of what seem contradicting experiences, and cling to it through hardships which we cannot understand, because of what He said. Nature gives us no unfailing confidence in the love of God; history seems sometimes to bring in evidence against the love of God. But He who knows God speaks, and in His word and life declares, and on the cross declares again, that our pain is not a negation of God's love. The Son of God was acquainted with grief. But He called God Father in the face of it all. He proclaimed the gospel of the love of God.

As to the will of God, the people to whom Christ spoke knew already that it

had to do with conduct. This was an advance beyond the teachings of many other religions according to which the will of God was chiefly concerned with ceremony. At the heart of these religions was a great fear of God, and the purpose of religion was to gain and keep His favor. This was accomplished, so they thought, by the offering of prescribed sacrifices and the performance of sacred rites. Beyond these propitiations the gods did not greatly care. Indeed, in the religions of Greece and Rome, with whose deities the children are made acquainted in school, the conduct of the gods themselves was in contradiction to all sound morality. The Old Testament people knew better than that. They knew that the God of all the earth would do right, and they knew also that He desires us to do right. The constant lesson of the Old Testament is that God blesses the righteous, and punishes the wrongdoer.

To this clear perception of the impor-

tance of conduct, Christ made two additions. He interpreted conduct in two new ways. He taught that sin is a matter not of action only but of emotion. And He taught that goodness is to be estimated not by word and deed only but by motive.

This new doctrine of the religious significance of emotion, He made plain in the Sermon on the Mount. A reference to the report of that discourse in the early chapters of St. Matthew will show the child precisely what is meant. The moral law said, "Thou shalt not kill," and that was as far as it went. At least, it was capable of being so interpreted as to touch only the act of murder. Jesus said that the law was broken by every emotion of unbrotherly anger. The anger might not express itself in any such form as to expose one to the penalties of the courts. It might not even be disclosed by angry words. But even the emotion was in God's sight sin. Whoever had a feeling of hatred in his heart broke

the commandment, and placed himself in the criminal company of murderers.

The same Sermon announced and illustrated the new doctrine of the religious significance of motive. Jesus took for example the three customary duties of alms-giving, fasting and prayer, and showed how one might perform all three of them with the utmost strictness, and yet be under the disapproval of God. What God cares for, He said, is the motive, the spirit, in which our life is lived. We get the reward which we honestly desire. If we live in the sight of God; having for our chief intention the purpose to please Him, we have our reward. If we live in the sight of men, endeavoring to win the praise of the people, we attain that: we get the praise of the people, but not the praise of God. It is the distinction between faith and works on which St. Paul so vigorously insisted. Works are what we do; faith is the motive which impels us to do them. So with the

Old Testament sacrifices. God, to whom all things belong, cared nothing for the sacrifice. Men gave Him this and that by offering it upon an altar, but it was His already. The value of the sacrifice in His sight was as a symbol of the love and devotion of him who made it. The true sacrifice, as the psalm says, is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart. And the same is true of all our works. What fathers and mothers desire of their children is not obedience only, but willing and glad and loving obedience. The supreme thing is the way rather than the work; the way, that is, in which the work is done.

These two new teachings,—the doctrine of emotion as an act of sin and the doctrine of motive as the interpreting part of goodness,—made right conduct a far more difficult matter than it had been before. According to the ordinary teaching of Christ's day, if a man's speech and action were righteous, the man himself was righteous.

He had but to control his hands and his tongue. There were definite things prescribed for him to do as a part of religion, and if he did them he was acceptable to God. But Jesus pointed to all this common conduct when He said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." One might live externally an admirable life, being obedient to the Commandments, a useful citizen, an unfailing attendant upon all the services of the church, and yet miss the kingdom of heaven altogether. These are they who appear at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, crying, "Lord, Lord, have we not preached in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" He says, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Their iniquity is altogether of the heart; their sin is in their emotion and their motive.

The effect of this teaching was to intensify the sense of sin. The classic expression of it is in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where St. Paul, who has lived a good life all his days, never willingly broken a commandment, and been exceedingly zealous in religion, says, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing. When I would do good, evil is present with me": present not in word or deed, but in emotion and in motive, in the thoughts of the heart. "O wretched man that I am," he cries, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Immediately, he adds, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

For although Christ thus brought a new sense of sin into the world, He brought also a new assurance of salvation. He came, as He said again and again, to save us from our sins. This He did, in part, by His revelation of the fatherhood of God. The parable of the prodigal son declared that

the process of salvation is first a turning about of the strayed sinner, away from sin toward God; and then, a certain acceptance of him by God, who waits with fatherly longing and love for that return. It is simple enough, as the parable unfolds it, and any child can understand it. The prodigal son comes to himself, perceives his wretched condition, realizes that it is the natural result of his own misconduct, and resolves to stop all that and go home. That is the sense of sin, and the sorrow and repentance and beginning of amendment which follow it. The father of the prodigal son receives him with great gladness. That is how God deals with every sinner who comes back to Him, sorrowing and repenting.

When it is said that Jesus saved us from our sins by dying for us on the cross, we seem to be taken out of the beautiful simplicity of the parable of the prodigal son and brought into a region of perplexity and

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confusion and hard doctrine. And it is true that there are mysteries here which are beyond our understanding. The best plan with children is to give them explanations which, while confessedly inadequate, are true as far as they go, and are sufficient for the time. The effect, for instance, of the death of Jesus upon the will of God, may be set aside as quite beyond the range either of the ideas or of the needs of childhood. We are much more directly concerned with the effect of the death of Christ upon ourselves. (Whatever divine transactions may have taken place concerning us in the council chambers of eternity, it is plain that there can be no salvation from our sin without our coöperation. We cannot be saved unless we will to be saved. We must realize our sin, and be sorry and repent, and turn about and do right.) That is essential. What we need is a strong incentive, and a great help. And that is provided for us by the death of Christ. To the formula of

the simplest doctrine of the incarnation—"God was in Christ,"—St. Paul adds in the same verse the formula of the simplest doctrine of the atonement,—“reconciling the world unto himself.”

The cross of Christ reconciles us to God, brings us back out of our sin to God, because it gives us a new emotion and a new motive.

The new emotion is that of love for Him who gave His life for us. He died for us. He saw that the sins of the hearts as well as of the bodies of men were destroying human happiness both now and hereafter; and He revealed and rebuked those sins in such a way that the scribes and pharisees, who were guilty of them, put Him to death. He died in contention against those sins which He saw were imperiling the life of the soul. It was as if a man were to die in his effort to disclose the cause of diseases which were attacking the lives of his neighbors. Such a death would reveal the condi-

tion of disease against which that tragic contention was made. People would now see the peril of that to which they had attached no great importance. And they would revere and love the memory of him who, at the cost of his own life, had saved them and their children. This is what Christ did. He made plain by His teaching, and plainer by His suffering, that sin is not audible and tangible and visible only, but that the worst form of it is of the spirit. He had to die to do it. He died testifying by His cross to the dreadfulness of sin, and to the divine love which for our good made Him lay down His life. And the result of an understanding of even so much of the cross as this is a new emotion: an emotion of hatred of sin, and of love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son.

Out of the new emotion springs a new motive. When we realize what He did, we desire to please Him. We resolve to live not in easy conformity to the world's

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ideals, not in accord with the ideals of the external religion against which He contended and by which He was crucified, but in bringing every thought of our heart into loving obedience to Him. This He did for us, and now we for Him will do all that we can, devoting ourselves and all that we are to Him. We ask ourselves, Is this what He would like? this word, this act, this thought? is this the right emotion, the right motive, in His sight? Our sense of loyalty assists us. Here is the supreme saint and hero, suffering for our good, even to the death upon the cross; Him will we follow, wherever He shall lead.

The Christian doctrine of salvation, as it appears in the New Testament, deals with our release from our sins, and, only in consequence, with our release from the punishment invited by our sins. The main thing is to get rid of our sins, in this present life. But He who revealed the nature of sin, as a matter initially of emo-

tion and of motive, and who came to save us from our sins by contending against them even to death, and by thus giving us a new motive and a new emotion, opened also to us, as the phrase is, the gates of life eternal. He took for granted, without discussion, that after death is life. He spoke often of the world beyond the grave, especially as a place where joy and sorrow are determined by moral conditions. He found a part of the significance of the present in its logical relation to the future: whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The harvest of earth, He said, is reaped and garnered in heaven. People shall be happy or unhappy after they die in proportion to their fitness to enter with understanding and appreciation into the conditions of the future life. Into that life we go, keeping our identity, bringing into it ourselves as we actually are. And we go where we belong. If we have been satisfied to be sinners, our place will be with the sinners,—a place

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whose name in the Bible is Hell. It used to be thought wise and prudent to make children pretty thoroughly acquainted with the serious disadvantages of hell, so that they might resolve not to go there. The endeavor was made to scare them into Heaven. The long discussion of this matter in our own generation has not disturbed the assurance of hell. The eternity of it for any given individual has, indeed, been brought in question. Everlasting punishment has been interpreted to mean an everlasting condition whereby punishment exists wherever and whenever sin exists. Our idea of the purpose of it has been somewhat affected by new theories of punishment, according to which pain is properly inflicted not for the sake of revenge but for the sake of remedy. Also, the flames of hell are not so material as they were, and have regard to the soul rather than the body. These changes make it impossible for us to present the idea of hell to our children so pic-

turesquely and vividly and menacingly as it may have been presented to us. We simply cannot do it. We can, however, make it pretty plain that gain and loss, and joy and sorrow, in this world and in all conceivable worlds, depend on appreciation. We enjoy and thereby possess all that we appreciate—books, pictures, music, society: to him that hath shall be given. And we lose all that we are unable to appreciate. If, therefore, we so live as to prefer the bad to the good, the good world is made inaccessible to us, the best of life is lost, here and hereafter, in the nature of things. If, on the other hand, we have tried to follow the example of the saints, our place will be with the saints, in that joy of the Lord which we have fitted ourselves to appreciate.

All this, the Son of God confirmed by His own victory over death. He died and rose again. He came back. He fulfilled the longing of all the ages that somebody might return after the experience of death

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to tell us plainly what comes next. He appeared to the disciples. He made it absolutely certain, by infallible proofs, that it was Himself come to life again, and alive for evermore. And He declared that into this life we may all enter. He brought life and immortality to light. That which men had always guessed, He made sure. Because He lives, we shall live also.

These truths, concerning God as the Maker of the world and the Father of mankind; concerning His love and His will, especially as made plain for us by His Son; concerning the meaning of sin as Christ taught it, and the escape from sin as Christ provided it; and concerning the life to come; should be a part of the moral and spiritual equipment with which a youth of the age of fifteen should be furnished. This much, at least, he ought to know and believe to his soul's health.

CHAPTER VII

THE SILENT INSTRUCTION OF EXAMPLE

IN any home where there is a definite desire to train the children in religion, opportunity will be found for the direct teaching for which materials have now been suggested. Another kind of tuition, however, proceeds everywhere, whether we are conscious of it or not. This is the silent instruction of example.

The consciousness of God, and the revelation made by Jesus Christ are a general possession of all normal communities in a Christian country, and they come to the child as a part of his heritage. But the strength and vividness of the child's religion depend greatly upon the position of religion in his home. The father and mother are perpetually teaching religion to their

children, by their example, by the tones of their voices, by what they are even more than by what they say, by the conditions of their own relationship to the unseen world. These lessons are not in any book. They are in the personality of the parents.

It is true that this influence is not absolutely determining. The differences which appear in children who are trained under the same guidance show that. So also does the fact that children sometimes come out good from bad homes and bad from good homes. There is some truth in the theory that unselfish mothers make selfish children: they accustom the children to being waited upon, and made much of, and deferred to. This is a part of the process which is properly called "spoiling" children. It is plain, also, that there are presentations of religion which may be distasteful to children, and which are therefore in reality arguments against it. Some training is followed by a reaction against its

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severity, its narrowness, its hostile or suspicious or nervous dealing with the natural joys of life. Even so, the religious influences of the home reveal their potency in their results; though the results are of the nature of a criticism of the domestic religion.

The fact that the chief training in religion is what the parents do and are rather than what they say in direct instruction, is, of course, discouraging when we consider what very inadequate examples most of us are. We hope that our children may grow up to be much better than we are. But there is one detail of encouragement in the matter. For many people it is impossible to "talk religion." Either it is so sacred a part of their experience that they cannot bear to put it into words, or it is so remote from what they know it ought to be, that silence seems more profitable than speech, or it is so much a matter of feeling, that they cannot well convey it to another,

or they are not good at explanation. But they can live it. Indeed, for good or ill, they must live it, whether they will or no. Thus this training in religion is within the ability of even the most reticent.

An important series of lessons in the silent instruction of example is given by conformity to the common customs of religion. The simplest thing which fathers and mothers can do for the direct religious welfare of their children is to attend church on Sunday. The neglect of such attendance suggests at once to the logical mind of the child that the institutions of religion are not highly prized by their parents. The zeal and punctuality with which such parents may insist upon the appearance of the children at Sunday-school or at church count for little, in the face of this inconsistency. The meaning is that the institutions of religion are mainly good for children; or, if the mother goes to church and not the father, that they are for children

and women. The boys look forward to the time when, being men like their father, they may stay at home as he does. The church is plainly depreciated in every household where the parents stand apart from visible connection with it.

Of course, such detachment from the church may have various good reasons to justify it. But they ought to be mighty good reasons. Good or not, they are mostly unintelligible to children. All that they see is the absence from the services, and that they take as a disparaging fact. Reasons which might weigh for much with an individual need to be very carefully reconsidered by parents in view of the inevitable consequences. The church is open to criticism, like all things human, but the fact remains that it is the most powerful of all organized influences for the forming and maintaining of character. Some people may get along without it, but not many; and those who live well without it commonly

do so on the basis of past training and experience. To let go of it is to abandon one of the most ancient and universal of the factors of character.

So far as it is true that children are less mindful of religion than they used to be, less conscious of God and less in awe of Him, one reason for the change may be found in the disuse of family prayer. In the absence of such a service, the household may easily go on, in the course of a peaceful life, with hardly any visible or audible recognition of the fact of religion, except on Sunday. But emotion and expression belong together. Emotion is sustained by expression. Affection, for example, needs the words of endearment. Otherwise, it is in danger of lapsing into indifference. So with religion.

Of course, there are all the hindering conditions of our hurried living. The trolley car interrupts our prayers. Most families, however, manage to breakfast to-

gether. And, in most cases, where such a breakfast is possible, prayers are possible. The domestic devotions, if the clock is importunate, may easily be conducted with dignity and reverence in five minutes. That is enough for a Scripture reading and a brief prayer. It may not compare very well with the extended household worship of our ancestors, but it is sufficient for the essential purpose of the act, which is to begin the day with a family recognition of the presence of God. The reading may be a psalm, or even one of the eight-verse sections of the hundred and nineteenth psalm. The prayer may be taken from a book. What is called extemporary prayer presents to many persons the most serious detail of the difficulty. Even a considerable reality and earnestness of religion may not bring with it the gift of liturgical expression. But this is easily managed. If the spirit of religion does not naturally and readily express itself in that manner, there

are plenty of good prayers. There is the Book of Common Prayer, older than our English Bible, filled with treasures of devotion, voicing most of our religious aspirations, and especially abounding in short prayers. Or there is the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship. A brief reading,—which is made more helpful, if time permits, by having the family join in the alternate verses,—a saying of the Lord's Prayer in unison, and a prayer out of a book, and the service is completed. It is made plain to the children that the presence of God, and the sense of the need of His protection, and the desire to serve Him, enter into the family life.

Anyhow, it is evident to all reflective persons that the most important achievement of any pair of parents is the bringing up of children in what is called a “godly, righteous and sober life.” We want them to have sound bodies; we want them to be trained to take a successful part in the life

about them; but we desire supremely that they shall be good. Nothing else can take the place of that. And to the accomplishment of this purpose it is necessary to give some serious attention, to take some time, and perhaps to make some sacrifices. If it is left to take care of itself, that will happen which takes place in the untended garden: the weeds will grow. In order to secure for religion a place of importance in the lives of our children, we must somehow assure them that we care a great deal about it ourselves. Such an assurance, in a perfectly natural and convincing way, is made by the act of family prayer. Those who are honestly intent on the instruction of children in religion may well give some careful consideration to the assistance in this process which is rendered by a household service.

Akin to family prayers is another good custom which we are unwisely allowing to pass into disuse,—the habit of saying grace

at meals. One may say, of course, Why give thanks for soup, joint and sweet, rather than for twenty other better kinds of divine providence? But that is not the point. The assembled family, the listening children, give the occasion. The purpose is to express our consciousness of God, and thereby to aid ourselves and our children to be religious. An ancient and excellent custom is to have grace said by the little children in turn, or by the youngest. Robert Herrick was not a very pious person, as piety is understood to-day: his verses are not to be unreservedly commended to the Young Men's Christian Association. But he wrote a pretty grace for children, which is still remembered:

“Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks though they be,
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat and on us all.”

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Stevenson in his "Child's Garden of Verses" takes the custom for granted.

"It is very nice to think
The world is full of meat and drink,
With little children saying grace
In every Christian kind of place."

A good grace in prose for a child, or for persons of any age, is this: "For these and all His mercies, God's Holy Name be praised." That is enough. It keeps the household mindful of God.

Even more important than church attendance, family prayers and grace at meals is the domestic conversation. Here the parents more or less consciously set the standard of value. The topics of conversation show what they are interested in, and the tone of the conversation shows what spirit they are of. Any contemptuous or satirical or hostile treatment of the institutions of religion makes an impression on the receptive mind. It is not easy to forget it.

These institutions are open to honest criticism. They have many times deserved it, and received it, and more or less reluctantly profited by it. The service and the sermon are often ill done. The singing is off the key, and the preaching contradicts the taste or the opinion of the hearer. And it is not well to pretend that these ministrations are good. They may be improved by comment and dissent. Unless, however, the offense is incessant and at last intolerable, or the teaching is such as ought not to go without denial, it is highly advisable to keep all this from the hearing of children. Partly because they may infer from it a general dislike for religion; partly because they may easily fall themselves into a habit of criticism which in their case will probably be most superficial and unintelligent; and partly because the moral attitude which is thus encouraged is adverse to the right psychological relation to the service of the church. A great degree of the helpfulness

of church attendance is due to certain psychological influences. They who go in the right spirit enter into the quiet of the place, refresh their souls with sounds of music whose spiritual value is not so much resident in themselves as in the associations of which they are symbols, are ministered to by the very look of things, and have their thoughts carried by the sermon away from the matters which occupied their attention during the week to themes which are of themselves elevating and ennobling. The critical spirit destroys at once all these conditions which make for the peace of the soul. When it was said of our Lord that He could do no mighty works among the people of Nazareth "because of their unbelief," the record was a clear statement of just this situation. Thus the critical parent, interposing his own unsympathetic mind between the service and himself, misses whatever blessing it may contain; and when his example makes his children

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of the same disposition, he prevents them also from getting the assistance of religion.

But at the heart of conversation is character. The fact that it is not so much what is said as how it is said that counts, is an evidence of the potency of character, which is revealed in the manner more clearly than in the matter of our words. It is plain that in the whole curriculum of the silent instruction of example no lesson is so important as the constant lesson of character. When St. Paul said, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example," he showed a confidence which we will hardly venture to assert, but at the same time he revealed his mastery of the method of religious instruction. Nothing could be more simple or more effective. His disciples were to watch him, and do what they saw him do. They were to be like him. Parents say that to their children, by the mere fact of their existence and relation-

ship. The children come gradually to perceive the value of the religion of their parents by discovering what it actually makes of them. What sort of persons are they because of their religion? Are they patient, kind, fair, considerate, cheerful, helpful? That which they do with their money is plain enough: they live in such and such a way, proportioned to it; they buy things with it, and thus enjoy it. What is it actually which religion adds to them? When money fails, and plans go wrong, and sickness comes, and the world withdraws its consolation, is there in religion that courage and comfort which the books say? How does it honestly work? What fruit of good living does it bear?

There are fathers and mothers who have never in their lives preached to their children in the spoken language of religion, whose good examples have been convincing and enduring sermons. The honesty of honest fathers in the midst of the tempta-

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tions of business, the serenity of sick and afflicted mothers,—these are plain religious results which win for religion the respect, the reverence and the allegiance of the children. When they asked in ancient Rome, “What made our ancestors stronger and better than we?” and answered, “It was their religion,” they presented thereby the most convincing of arguments. It was evident that the religion which had thus revealed itself in character was the real thing.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

DORMALLY, the first actual lesson in religion will be an elementary instruction in the ancient and universal practice of prayer. The child will kneel beside his mother, and she will repeat at first for him and afterwards with him, the words of petition.

In so doing, the mother will contradict a very respectable theory regarding human nature. This theory is that the act and the understanding, and more especially the word and the understanding, ought to go together. This implies that the child should not be made to do or to say that which makes no appeal to his reason. It is frequently urged against the memorizing of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the

Ten Commandments. It is sometimes pressed so far as to persuade parents to delay almost all religious instruction until their children have reached the years of some discretion. It would forbid the recitation of prayers by little children.

This theory, however, is one of those merely academic propositions which, however sustained by logic, surrender at the first vigorous attack of experience. It has a reasonable sound, but it is not true to the psychological facts. The human mind does not work that way. In the order of progress, the explanation of things appears long after the things. First the things, then, as we grow wiser or older, the thingness of things. Thus it is fairly maintained by students of the Old Testament that the book of Job, which is without date or note of time, belongs to a late stage in the history of Israel. The fact of pain, about which the book is centered, is indeed one of the earliest of facts; and the scenery and action

of the book are so simple as to seem primitive; but it is argued from the literary phenomena of all peoples that the endeavor of Job to explain what pain means is evidence that he and his contemporaries have come into the reflective period. And that period is late with nations as it is with individuals.

The normal child does not reflect. He does, indeed, ask "Why?" incessantly, but he is not in search of a philosophical answer, nor able to receive it. And meanwhile he is continually learning things the reasons for which are altogether beyond his understanding. One of these things is the alphabet, another is the multiplication table. These are imposed upon him by authority. He is made to commit them to memory, although the alphabet makes no appeal to his reason whatever, and the multiplication table,—after our most careful explanations,—is taken without reflection as one of the conditions of a mysterious world.

Language, also, is arbitrary; names are given to objects without obvious reason. Social customs are arbitrary. Civilization is gently forced upon the growing child, without his choice, and without other argument than the will of his elders. The process of early discipline is for the sake of bringing him to accept a great body of tradition, most of which exceeds his understanding. Nobody dreams of leaving him to his aboriginal savagery until he has opportunity to examine our civilization and decide whether or not it meets his inclinations. Often quite against his will, we civilize him and educate him.

And the same logic of good sense holds in religion. Here also the child is to be initiated into the common tradition. He is to be related to the church as he is related to the school. As he is civilized, he is also to be christianized. As he is taught the multiplication table and the alphabet, he is to be taught the Creed, the Ten Command-

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ments and the Lord's Prayer. As he is made to eat with his fork instead of his knife, so he is made to kneel down when he says his prayers. All these different things belong to the same department of psychology, and have their foundation in the same conclusions of experience. There is no more reason for setting religion apart from the rest of life than for dealing in like manner with instruction in health or in behavior. All these belong to the general nature of things, and are to be taken naturally.

Religion is the most ancient of all branches of instruction. It antedates the alphabet by thousands of years. It began to be taught when Eve held Cain on one knee and Abel on the other beside the gate of Eden. And the immemorial custom is to teach both rites and words before the children know the significance of either. It has been found that rites and words beyond their understanding are like seeds

planted in the soil, to grow when the time comes and the conditions favor.

Indeed, in the matter of the great religious formulas, such as the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, the difference between the children and their parents is one of degree only. None of us understands any part of these great statements fully. Each of us, beginning with some sort of idea, sufficient for the moment, finds it more and more interpreted, sometimes changed, sometimes enriched, by our experience. Our idea of God, for example, comes to have new contents as the years pass. And this is true of the race. Progress in every direction is made by a better understanding of the common life. Steam, for instance, had been in existence among men since fire and water met, but at last one man, watching it and reflecting upon it, connected it with a machine, and altered the whole condition of industrial society. So Darwin took the ancient doctrine of

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creation,—the belief in God as the Maker of the world,—and disclosed marvelous processes which we had never before observed. The faith is all the time undergoing this interpretation, whereby, though the old words remain, they are filled with new meanings. The first step is to get the words into the mind, then the meanings will grow out of them according to the mysterious providence which brings the oak out of the acorn.

Thus kneeling is taught, like walking; the words are taught like the words of the vocabulary of common life. The habit is secured. There is plenty of time for explanation and application when the child asks for it. The first necessity is to have the thing itself, which may be interpreted by instruction and experience, and concerning which we all learn more the older we grow, and, even at our wisest, know but a part.

As for the words of prayer, objection

may be made reasonably against the familiar and time-hallowed, "Now I lay me down to sleep." It is an inadequate and rather selfish petition and it dwells with inordinate emphasis on the immediate probability of death. The idea of death is naturally and properly remote from the minds of children; and the suggestion that we are quite likely to die before we wake is not supported by ordinary experience. Mrs. Mary Duncan, in 1839, composed for her children a rhyming prayer which has found its way into several collections of hymns, and into common use.

" Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,
 Bless Thy little lamb to-night;
Through the darkness be Thou near me;
 Keep me safe till morning light.

" All this day Thy hand has led me,
 And I thank Thee for Thy care;
Thou has warmed me, clothed and fed me;
 Listen to my evening prayer!

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“Let my sins be all forgiven;
Bless the friends I love so well;
Take us all at last to heaven,
Happy there with Thee to dwell.”

A simple prayer in prose, for little children, is in these words: “O Lord our Heavenly Father, lead me, guard me, help me, bless me, keep me, make me pure and brave and true in all I think and say and do!” Here the single echo of a rhyme assists the memory. Another prayer is this: “O Lord, our Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for Thy love and care for me to-day; forgive my sins; bless all for whom I ought to pray; and help us all to love Thee more and more; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Whatever formal prayer is taught, the children will be instructed to end it with intercession: “God bless father and mother,” and the other members of the household by name. As soon as possible, the Lord’s Prayer should be added. When children begin to go to school, the time may be taken

as an opportunity to revise their prayers. And the same may be done when they are ready to pass out of the lower grades into the high school. In this way, the deepening and enriching of religion is a natural accompaniment to the progress of their education.

At the second of these periods of liturgical revision, the child may be given a book of prayers. This, of course, supposes that the parents are accustomed to the use of such precomposed devotions. Where the habit of the family is to pray without a book, instruction may well be given at this point as to the order of petition.

We kneel down, in order that our bodies as well as our minds and souls may be made a part of our offering of praise and prayer; and also because a devout posture of body assists a devout posture of mind. A negligent, lounging attitude is not only out of keeping with our occupation, but has a psychological effect upon us. We begin to

pray aright, by entering into that disposition of body which has been found not only most appropriate but most helpful. We kneel down, as the English Prayerbook says, "upon our knees," and the detailed suggestion is seen to be needed when we observe the easy habit of some who kneel upon their foreheads.

Thus kneeling, we begin with the consciousness of the presence of God. Before a word of prayer is spoken, we consider what it is that we are about to do. We are in the divine presence, and are to speak to God. Here we kneel on the surface of this little globe, the earth, and look out into the immensities and eternities. We are to speak to the Unseen. We are to address God, who is indeed our Father, and is thus to be approached with love and confidence, but who is also our Maker, and the Maker and Ruler of all the universe; the God of our life, but the God also of the centuries and of the stars. The Lord's Prayer sounds

the true note of devotion when it begins “Our Father, who art in heaven.” The words set side by side the love and the power of God, the nearness and the greatness of God. Thus we say, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be alway acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.” Or we use an ancient Christian formula of good beginning, and say, “In the name of God”; or, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” And as we say the words we try to realize what we are about. Or else, we say no words at all, but think in silence. A good many hasty and ill-considered prayers would be corrected by such a method of reverent approach. It changes the saying of one’s prayers into genuine prayer.

Then the prayer may begin with words of gratitude,—for preservation and health, for the manifold blessings of our lives, for any special manifestation of the divine care

and compassion. If it is in the morning, this thanksgiving may be followed by an anticipation of the ensuing day, its tasks and its temptations, its special needs of guidance and strength: thus and thus are to be the occupations of our day; may the Lord help us to meet them in a Christian manner, after the example of our Master; may He defend us “from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul”; may He grant to us “such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations.” If it is in the evening, this anticipation may be changed into examination. How has the day gone? What have we said and done? Especially, in what details of speech or action have we conducted ourselves amiss? To what temptations have we yielded? Into what negligences or offenses have we fallen? May the Lord forgive us, and help us to do better; may

He spare us who confess our faults, and restore us who are penitent, according to the promises of Jesus Christ, our Lord; may He help us to live a godly, righteous and sober life.

After this anticipation or examination will come intercession. We will pray for those who are by nature a part of our own life, and for others with whom we are associated, and for classes and groups of people, such as are remembered in the Litany or in the customary prayers of the churches,—those who are in places of civil and spiritual authority, those who by their debates and votes are making our laws, those who are in the service of great causes; and, with them, those for whose welfare the great causes are undertaken, who are grievously tempted, who are in suffering, who are oppressed by poverty. All this is in the spirit of the Lord's Prayer, which is a form of social intercession, whose plural pronouns rebuke the narrowness of the petitions which

take into account only one's immediate family.

In the elementary prayers of early childhood, or in these advanced prayers wherein youth enters into the spiritual fellowship of all the saints, what place shall be given to the desire for specific material blessings? Shall prayer be encouraged for good weather for a holiday, for success in study or in sport, or for things desired, beginning with new toys? The sanction of this kind of prayer is given in the custom of all churches and people to pray for the recovery of the sick. There is a definite, material blessing which we ask for by instinct. And the instinct is confirmed by many instances of such asking and answering in the Bible. Children ought, then, to be encouraged, when occasion arises, to pray such prayers as that. That the offering of such intercessions is of actual avail, makes a difference, accomplishes something, is impressed upon us by a new perception of the

connection between faith and recovery. There is in the process of recovery somewhat more than medicine. The patient is perceived to be a person mysteriously made up of soul and body. The two are united in a manner which passes our understanding, but united they are. The process of healing has to do with the whole man. And prayer is a part of it. Whether it affects the will of God, who waits for our earnest asking, or the will of the patient which by our faith is strengthened, we cannot say. But, as a result of recent developments in religion and in medicine, people are now praying for the sick with a new courage.

The case of rain or shine is different, but the old theory that the prayer for a change of weather is a prayer for a change in a series of causes and effects which goes back to the creation of the world, is now seen to be mistaken. There is no reason, in the nature of things, why God should not send or withhold the rain in answer to our

prayers. Such an answer "need involve no greater interference with the order of nature than is implied in a request to a gardener to water the garden." "Let us bethink ourselves," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "that it is not an inconceivable possibility that at some future date mankind may acquire some control over the weather, and be able to influence it; not merely in an indirect manner, as at present they can affect climate, by felling forests or flooding deserts, but in some more direct fashion; in that case, prayers for rain would begin again, only the petitions would be addressed not to heaven, but to the Meteorological Office. We do not at present ask the secretary of that government department to improve our seasons, simply because we do not think that he knows how; if we thought he did, we should have no hesitation, on the score of his possible non-existence, or a doubt lest our letter should never reach him. Professor Tyndall's dogma will, if pressed,

be found to embody one of these last alternatives, although superficially it pretends to make the somewhat grotesque suggestion that the alteration requested is so complicated and involved, that really, with the best intentions in the world, the Deity does not know how to do it." What we ask is simply that God will do what we ourselves can do as regards our own yard, and what we would do on a larger scale if men were only wise and strong enough.

Indeed, the prayers of children for good weather and for other specific answers proceed logically from our teaching of the being, the might and the love of God. We tell the children that God cares for every one of us, that He is interested in the lives even of the smallest and youngest, and that the world in which we live is His world, His house in which we His children live; and the proper inference is that we may all bring to Him our earnest desires, and ask Him to fulfill them. This is the creed

practically applied. Prayer is an expression of our belief in the being and the love of God.

The difficulty is in the fact that such specific prayers seem to offer an immediate test of this belief. And the plain evidence of such a test is that God does not always answer us. The child prays for a fair day, and it rains. Then, unless we have some reasonable explanation to make, the child infers either that the unseen being of whom we have told him does not exist, or that his parents do not know so much about God as he thought they did, or that God, if He does exist, does not care, or is not affected by our desires; and, in any case, that it is of no use to pray. Against these inferences, it is our business as religious teachers to instruct him.

The easiest illustration is the example of the younger children. They are continually expressing their desires; they are asking for things with almost every breath.

And this differs from what we call prayer only in that they make these requests of their parents instead of making them of God. All these wishes of the little children in the nursery are essentially prayers. All of these prayers are heard; they enter into the ears of elder persons who are able, in most cases, to grant them if they will. The elders are pleased to have the children make these prayers; they like to be asked for this and that; they are glad to be informed as to the needs and interests and wishes of their children. In the order of nature, they would do many of the things which they are asked to do without asking; nevertheless, the asking is a pleasure to their ears. It is an expression of a very blessed dependence and trust. Some of these requests are granted; and are granted because the requests are made. The parents do things which they might otherwise not do, because they are requested. But many requests are not granted. Children ask for

impossible things, and for undesirable things. Sometimes they ask their parents to do at this moment that which may better be done at a later time. Sometimes they ask for that which while it would make them happy would conflict with the happiness of others, and with the wise plans and customs of the family. These prayers are not answered. The children are often grieved about it. They cry aloud. It seems to them that they are dealt with hardly. But that is because they do not understand. They cannot understand. The older children, looking on, appreciate the situation. An inference from the unanswered prayers of children that their parents did not exist, or did not care, or that prayer is of no use, is as absurd as a similar inference from the unanswered prayers which are made to God. When the children are old enough to ask questions about prayer, they should be instructed by this illustration. They are to pray, as their

younger brothers and sisters ask for things; but they are to expect to be answered only in accordance with the wise will of God. They are to be told beforehand that their prayers will not compel God, any more than the requests of small children compel their parents. God will grant them if He sees fit. If they are not granted, the meaning is that God did not see fit to do so. The hard sayings of the Bible about the prayer of faith removing mountains, and about the divine fulfillment of the prayers offered by the faithful who agree together to ask God, and all the strong promises which perplex the minds of children, are to be kept side by side with our Lord's saying, "Not My will but Thine be done." Children are to be taught that that is the essential condition of all true prayer. The Bible repeatedly affirms the effectiveness of prayer, and denies that its only value is to induce in us a submissive mind, and experience confirms this estimate. But even the collective

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prayer of great companies of good people is not properly an endeavor to compel God. It submits the will of man to the divine consideration. We are to pray in all earnestness for all things which we desire, but the purpose of our most eager petitions must be to submit these matters, in all devout dependence and trust, like good children, to the judgment and decision of the infinite wisdom of our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER IX

A TREASURY OF DEVOTION

HE prayers of little children will, of course, be without variation, the same prayer day after day; except as the child, of his own mind or at the suggestion of his parents, may add special petitions or intercessions. As the children grow older, and the time comes for them to say their prayers by themselves, they may learn other forms by heart or may read them out of a book. Such prayers will not differ necessarily from those which are used by older persons. They will naturally be brief and simple, but these are good qualities in all our devotions. The same prayers which may be commended to children of high-school age may serve as well for use at household worship. In the composi-

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tion and selection of the prayers which follow, I have had both of these needs in mind.

In the first selection of the prayers for each of the days of the week, the first prayer in each instance is taken from the Book of Common Prayer, and the second, with some changes, from Short Prayers for Family Devotions by the Rev. H. Stobart, published in England by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In the second series, the first prayers are from the Book of Common Worship, published under the direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and the second prayers are freely adapted from various sources.

I

Sunday

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of Thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with

all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

O most holy and most merciful Father, who of Thy goodness hast provided for us in this place a house set apart for Thy worship and service; dispose our hearts to reverence Thy sanctuary; vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to be there in the midst of us this day; pardon all our unworthiness, and enable us to present ourselves, our souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Monday

O God, who hast prepared for those who love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward Thee that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who seest the ways of man, and countest all his steps; we meekly beseech Thee, of Thy great love, to order and protect our goings this week and for evermore, and to grant that in all our sojourn here we have the assurance of Thine assisting presence, and may always perceive what Thou wouldest have us to do, and may perform it according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Tuesday

O God, the protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy, that, Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, we beseech Thee to visit us this day with Thy loving-kindness. Give us grace faithfully to fulfill our duties to Thee

and to each other. Make us kind and courteous unto all men, honest in our dealings, truthful in our words, guileless in our thoughts. Strengthen us to bear with patience whatsoever trials may be in store for us, preserve us from the sins which do most easily beset us, and enable us this day and ever to walk worthy of our Christian calling; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Wednesday

Grant to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

O Lord, Who hast given us sleep to refresh and strengthen us, vouchsafe us this day a holy, peaceful, sinless course. Grant to our souls the Holy Spirit, to our bodies

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Thy blessed protection. Deliver us from all our temptations, and teach us to do the things that please Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Thursday

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, Who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with Thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings, being ordered by Thy governance, may be righteous in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Into Thy hands, most gracious Father, we commit ourselves and all belonging to us, this day. Grant that we may pass this and every day in the perfecting of holiness, in health, and peace and quietness, and innocence, to the glory of Thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Friday

Almighty God, Who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O almighty God, Whom without faith it is not possible to please; enable us, we beseech Thee, so perfectly to believe in Thy Son Jesus Christ that our faith in Thy sight may never be reproved; and grant that as we are called to a knowledge of Thy grace and faith in Thee, we may avoid all those things that are contrary to our profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Saturday

O almighty God, Who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; grant unto Thy people that they may love the thing that Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou dost promise; that so among the sundry and manifold changes of the world our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

We offer unto Thee, O Lord, our praises and thanksgivings for all Thy mercies multiplied upon us, more than we can number and greater than we can express. More especially do we praise Thee for those spiritual blessings which Thou hast revealed to us in the gospel of Thy Son. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which Thou, O God, hast prepared for those who love Thee. Give us grace, O Lord, to love Thee more and more, till we come to Thine

everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

II

Sunday

Eternal God, our Maker and our Lord, Giver of all grace, from Whom every good prayer cometh, and Who pourest Thy Spirit upon all who seek Thee; deliver us, when we draw nigh to Thee, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind; that with steadfast thoughts and pure affections we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, Who makest both the darkness and the light, and turnest the shadow of death into the morning, receive, we beseech Thee, our prayers and thanksgivings, and enrich us now and ever with the continual blessing of Thy grace; grant that we may pass this day in rest and peace, and to the welfare of our souls and bodies; and help

us to hallow it according to Thy holy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Monday

Most holy and merciful Father, we acknowledge and confess in Thy presence our sinful nature prone to sin and slothful in good, and all our shortcomings and offenses against Thee. Thou alone knowest how often we have sinned, in wandering from Thy ways, in wasting Thy gifts, in forgetting Thy love. But Thou, O Lord, have pity upon us, who are ashamed and sorry for all wherein we have displeased Thee. Teach us to hate our errors, cleanse us from our secret faults, and forgive our sins, for the sake of Thy dear Son our Saviour. And, O most holy and loving Father, send Thy purifying grace into our hearts, we beseech Thee, that we may henceforth live in Thy light and walk in Thy love, according to the commandments of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Who art true and faithful and full of mercy, look, we pray Thee, upon us and bless us with all spiritual benediction and grace. Keep us this day in safety, preserve us in righteousness, increase in us the spirit of true affection, and lead us into life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Tuesday

O God, most holy, wise and powerful Preserver and Governor of all Thy creatures and all their actions; keep us this day in health of body and soundness of mind, in purity of heart and cheerfulness of spirit, in contentment with our lot and charity with our neighbor; and further all our lawful undertakings with Thy blessing. In our labor strengthen us, in our pleasure purify us, in our difficulties direct us, in our perils defend us, in our troubles comfort us, and supply all our needs, accord-

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ing to the riches of Thy grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord our heavenly Father, Who remainest faithful throughout all generations, just in Thy judgments, wonderful in Thy might and majesty, full of tender-mercy and loving-kindness; forgive us our faults, our injustices, our shortcomings, our transgressions, our negligences and ignorances; remember not our sins past, but this day direct our steps that we may walk in holiness of heart; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Wednesday

Provide for us, O most merciful Father, both now and in the days to come, those things which are needful for our welfare both in soul and body, and guide us by Thy Word and Spirit in the way of a willing obedience to Thee. Teach us ever to look unto Thee as our Master and Rewarder, that all our work may be done in

Thy service; replenish us with Thy daily gifts, that we may not lack any good thing, and keep us ever in a humble and grateful mind, that we may live peacefully with all men, and praise Thee by well-doing, according to the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Blessed Lord, Who didst make all things for our good and Thy service; remember us this day to deliver us from all evil, to prosper us in our work, and to make us perfect in Thy love; bless, we beseech Thee, all undertakings for the benefit of men, sustain with Thine enabling grace all ministers of true religion, and sanctify Thy holy Church throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Thursday

Grant us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, always to seek Thy kingdom and Thy righteousness; and of whatsoever Thou seest us to be in need, mercifully grant us an

abundant portion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Visit, we beseech Thee, most gracious Father, this household with Thy salvation; let Thy blessing descend and rest upon all that belong to us, continue and preserve us Thy faithful servants, guide us with Thy counsel here, and bring us hereafter to Thy glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Friday

O most merciful Father, Who of Thy tender compassion toward us guilty sinners didst give Thine only-begotten Son to be an offering for our sins; grant us grace, we humbly beseech Thee, that being united unto Him by Thy Spirit, and made partakers of His sufferings and His death, we may crucify the corrupt inclinations of the flesh, die daily unto the world, and lead holy and unblamable lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who taketh away the sin of the world, deliver us this day from the temptations which beset us; and so fill our hearts with joy and gladness that we may abound in all good works and deeds; for His sake Who gave Himself for us, Thy Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Saturday

O God of love, Giver of concord, Who hast sent us a new commandment, through Thine only-begotten Son, that we should love one another, even as Thou didst love us the unworthy and wandering, and gavest Thy Son for our life and salvation; we pray Thee, Lord, give to us Thy servants, in all time of our life on earth, a mind forgetful of past ill-will, a pure conscience and sincere thoughts, and a heart to love our brethren; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O Lord, merciful and mighty, be Thou

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our help in all time of our need; comfort those who are in tribulation, strengthen the faint-hearted, heal the sick, remember the poor; enable us to meet the difficulties of this day with victory; in His name, Who was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin, Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

In addition to these and other daily prayers, there are two spiritual occasions for which special devotions should be provided. One of these is the time of preparation for being received, by confirmation or otherwise, into the full responsibility and privilege of the church. What is needed is realization and aspiration. The child should realize the importance and the significance of that which he is about to undertake, and should honestly and earnestly aspire to grow in grace and in the knowledge and the love of God.

Such realization is had by considering attentively what is implied in confirmation.

It is expressed in this question: “Do ye here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name, at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your Sponsors then undertook for you?” The baptismal obligation, thus renewed, concerns renunciation, faith and obedience. “Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them? Dost thou believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as they are contained in the Apostles’ Creed? Wilt thou obediently keep God’s holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?” The implications of these promises in detail will be made clear to the

child in the instructions, at home and in church, which will constitute his preparation. He will be taught what is meant by the renouncing of the world, of the flesh and of the devil; what is the significance of the Creed, article by article; and what is the definite application of each of the Commandments. Such prayers as follow may accompany these instructions.

Grant, O Lord, that I may not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.

Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace that I may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until I come unto Thy everlasting kingdom.

Let Thy fatherly hand ever be over me, let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with me, and so lead me in the knowledge and obedience

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of Thy Word that in the end I may obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of Thy laws and in the works of Thy commandments; that through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved both in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

O Lord, our heavenly Father, to Thee and to Thy service I devote myself, body and mind and soul and strength; help me truly to know what Thou wouldest have me to believe and do, and give me grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; forgive me for my besetting sins and help me to gain the mastery over them; help me to make right resolutions and to keep them; and thus to be a loyal disciple of Him Whom I would love and follow ever more

and more, Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

By such prayers as these, realization is led on into aspiration.

The second spiritual occasion follows naturally after this public confirmation of the baptismal vows. The child comes to the Holy Communion. And this is thereafter to be an habitual part of the religious life. It is to be a refreshment and spiritual assistance and divine blessing continually repeated. But the blessing waits upon the child's receiving, and is inevitably measured by it. That is God's way. He gives as much as we will take. Accordingly, it is of great importance that the child shall come to this sacrament, as he comes to the confirmation which precedes it, with both realization and aspiration; knowing in what spirit he should come in order to be blessed of God, and with all his heart desiring thus to come.) The spirit is defined in an ancient question and answer.

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“What is required of those that come to the Lord’s Supper? To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men.”

Thus the child is to examine himself. Do I repent me truly of my former sins? What are these sins in thought, in word, in deed, measured by the Commandments, measured by the Beatitudes? What am I doing against the will of God? What am I leaving undone? Am I honestly desirous to be better? And as to my faith: do I remember the death of Christ with thanksgiving for His love and sacrifice for me? Am I loyal to Him, as a soldier is loyal to his captain, or as a knight was loyal to his quest? And am I in charity with all? Is there anyone towards whom I have a heart of hatred? Am I honestly endeavoring,

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though under difficulty, to be forgiving? Am I making the place where I live more pleasant because I live there? Am I of use in the world, ministering to the needs of others?

Then self-examination rises into petition. In the spirit of penitence and aspiration, the child approaches his heavenly Father.

O Blessed Jesus, Who, for our sins, didst pour out Thy blood on the cross; give me grace never to forget Thy tender love towards us, and grant that what Thou wast then content to endure for us men and for our salvation, may be effectual to the saving of our souls. O Thou, who didst vouchsafe to take death for the sins of every man, mortify in me all things that are contrary to Thy holy will, that I may be crucified unto the world and live only unto Thee, Who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, art one God, world without end. *Amen.*

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O almighty God, Who dost put into our minds good desires and dost give us grace and strength to bring them to good effect; help me in my weakness and failure and penitence with Thy mighty power; enable me now to begin again another and better life, wherein by thought and word and deed I may please Thee; and fill my heart anew with love for Thee and for all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Here, O Lord, I offer and present unto Thee myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee. Grant that I may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ, be filled with Thy grace and heavenly benediction, and made one body with Him, that He may dwell in me and I in Him; to Whom be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of Thy servants towards the attainment

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of everlasting salvation ; that among all the changes and chances of this mortal life we may ever be defended by Thy gracious and ready help ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

CHAPTER X

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILDREN

IDE by side with the prayers of the children will go a reading of the Bible. Because the Bible has been proved by long and abundant experience to be the supreme book of religion. There is nothing else like it in the literature of the race. And its superiority to all other books is not only on the side of theology, in its revelation of God, but on the side of emotion and of conduct, in its actual influence on life. That is, it exceeds all other reading in its relation to the determining purpose of all our training of our children in religion,—the purpose to help them to be good. We look anxiously about for assistance in our great task, seeking whatever we may best bring to bear upon our sons and

daughters for the moulding of their lives, and an innumerable chorus of voices assures us, on the basis of experience, that the most potent of assisting influences is between these covers.

The fact that the covers are flexible, and the edges gilded, and that almost every sentence of the book is printed in a paragraph by itself and numbered hinders children nowadays,—and their parents also,—from getting all the inspiration which the Bible contains. For these unusual conditions distract the eye and interrupt the mind. Moreover, the printer and the binder set the Bible artificially apart from other books, in such a way that while we may take it up with expectations of spiritual profit, we do not readily open it with expectations of human interest. It is one of the most interesting books in the world, but many people never find this out beneath these typographical disguises. When Robert Stephens, in 1551, occupied himself during

a tiresome journey from Lyons to Paris in dividing the Bible into verses, his intention was to make it convenient for reference. The religious world was filled with controversy, and the common quarry out of which to get materials for debate was the Bible. Everything was decided by citation of texts. Stephens, in his laborious numbering, was thinking of the debates. He was making things easy for preachers, for students, and for theologians. He never thought of the ordinary reader. In consequence, the Bible, as he arranged it for us on that dusty journey, is a book for the desks of scholars. It is an array of numbered texts.

The Revised Version helps us out a little by assembling the numbered texts in paragraphs. But the intrusive numbers remain, and the page is still unlike the pages of the books which we are accustomed to read for pleasure. The two columns have a forbidding look. The Bible is still a commentator's text-book, made for men whose sen-

tences end with such expressions as "II Sam. vi, 18," or "I Cor. VIII, 12." It is still related to the real Bible as the school Homer and the school Virgil are related to the splendid poems which, after school, we read for the new joy of reading them, with a sense of discovery. One of the first things, then, for the judicious parent to do for the growing child, who is old enough to begin to read the Bible by himself, is to get him a Bible which is printed not for students but for simple readers. "Everyman's Library," for example, provides such a Bible in five small volumes, each costing thirty-five cents, bound like other books, and printed like other books. Such an edition brings into the reading a new element of interest.

A much more serious difficulty in the way of teaching the Bible to children is presented by a common confusion of mind regarding the nature of the book. To our ancestors, the Bible was a single book, of

practically uniform value, openable anywhere with profit to the reader, because wherever opened it disclosed the mind and will of God. There was no doubt about it. Under these conditions, the mere reading of the Bible, even without much understanding, was a means of grace. Something was conveyed from the sacred page into the soul. It is true that the details of ancient and obsolete ritual in Leviticus, and the lists of proper names in Genesis and Chronicles, brought no definite spiritual message, but it did people good to read them. They were at least the symbols of a divine care for men. The reverent reader saw God between the lines. His soul was benefited without intellectual analysis or comprehension, like the soul of one who worships through the medium of a service whose language he is not able to translate, or who listens with spiritual satisfaction to a sermon which he does not attempt to understand. That which is essential to the blessing in these

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cases is the attitude of expectancy. And that depends upon a certain sense of sacredness.

When this sense of the invariable sacredness of the Bible was interrupted by the critics, a change immediately began. The critics said that there are errors in the Bible; at first, in the geology of the first chapters of Genesis; then in the history contained in Kings and Chronicles, where numbers, facts and motives seemed to differ in parallel records; then in morals, as in the praise given to the murder of Sisera by Jael, and the hewing of Agag in pieces by Samuel; at last, even in theology, when the idea of God walking in Eden under the trees of the orchard was contrasted with the conception of God as invisible and infinite, and compared with the statement, "No man hath seen God at any time." The Bible said that Moses and other men saw God. Then the whole question of the miraculous was raised for discussion. Doubt was cast

upon the story of the adventures of Jonah, and upon the speech of Balaam's ass, and gradually upon the marvels wrought by Moses and by Elijah and Elisha; until finally the dark shadow of the eclipse of faith touched even the New Testament.

In these hard circumstances, people knew not how to answer their own questions, and were at a still greater difficulty in the endeavor to answer the questions of their children. They were afraid to say aloud what they thought in the secret places of their minds. At the same time, they hated to tell lies. They shrank from imposing on the acceptance of their children that which they were no longer able to accept. But they feared lest a disillusionizing of their children should be followed on their part by a rejection of religion. They had more or less consciously based religion upon the infallibility of the Bible, and when they found themselves unable to maintain that the Bible is infallible, they felt as men have

done in Holland when they discovered that the sea was leaking through the dikes.

Thus the old mystic value of the mere act of reading the Bible,—which gave even to the syllables of “Melchizedek” and “Mesopotamia” a certain power to rest tired people and to console the sorrowful,—grew dim or faded away. The Bible was no longer put with the same confidence into the hands of youth. Fathers and mothers, whose own parents had read the Bible to them, did not read it to their children, because they did not know how to answer the inevitable questions. The Sunday-schools continued to evade some of the difficulties by taking away the Bible and giving the children in the place of it judicious selections from the Bible printed on “leaflets.” But this was but a temporary and unsatisfying expedient.

The result of these conditions was a whole generation of children, who are now in their turn fathers and mothers, who were

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not made acquainted with the Bible in any thorough way. Of course, there were happy exceptions. But on the whole, when one considers to-day the instruction of children in the Bible, this is the common situation. The fathers and mothers do not know much about the Bible. At the same time, there is a notable revival of interest in the Bible. The college students whose ignorance was the amazement, the amusement and the despair of their teachers, have given place to others, their successors, who are reading and studying the Scriptures in unprecedented numbers. The voluntary classes in this subject in all the colleges are a significant symbol of a great change. Thus side by side with parents who do not feel themselves qualified to teach, are children who desire to learn. No generation of parents has ever been in more urgent and recognized need of aid in this great matter.

Under these conditions, the initial necessity is a clarifying of the mind as to the

nature of the Bible. First, as to the question of inerrancy. There is no such thing. Not only is it true that "to err is human," but error is a universal and unescapable quality of human thought and language. We cannot evade it. Truth remains, and is attainable; but it is always approximate, never complete and adequate. Accuracy remains; but its province is in the world of mathematics and of physical science; and even here it is often more apparent than real. For example, there is no possibility of giving an exhaustive and final description of a hill or of a tree. Our knowledge does not go far enough. After all is said and verified and set down, matter remains a mystery and life remains a mystery.

When we proceed to the field of human nature, our fallibility becomes more evident. There is no possibility of knowing all about any battle, or any adventure or discovery, or any motive, or any man. When the writers of Kings say that David

was moved to number the people by the word of God, and the writers of Chronicles say that he was moved to take that census by the suggestion of Satan, they illustrate that mixture of good and bad which enters into the whole of human life. History is thus a record of events which can never be fully recorded, and an interpretation of motives which can never be fully understood. The factor of human nature in history is like the factor of infinity in algebraic formulas: it forbids the attainment of complete and precise results.

Then when we go on from our accounts of the thoughts and activities of men to speak of the works of God, the truth is plainly beyond the range of understanding. Our words are "thrown out," as the phrase is, towards inconceivable realities. Our statements are made under the limitations of our constitutional ignorance. All divinity has two sides, a nearer and a farther; a nearer side concerning which we may get

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some definite,—though, even then, imperfect,—idea; and a farther side which is beyond the focus of the most far-seeing mind. A system of theology which is comprehensive and complete, which explains everything; and brings the world and man and God into final definitions, is shown by its very perfection to be mistaken. Such a process is impossible with our abilities and our materials. The most elaborate definitions of the most learned theologians are like a child's explanation of the conduct of his father's business. We attain truth, but always mixed with error. Our truth is practical, rather than absolute: it is true for us, and enough for us to live by, but it is only true in part for God.

Under these limitations all history and all theology are written; both outside and inside the Bible. Even the Mormon theory of a discovered Bible, dug up out of a hill where the angels of God buried it, even the Mohammedan theory of a dictated

Bible, written by one who without discretion set down what was communicated to him in heaven, would leave abundant room for error. For a book to be effectively inerrant must have an inerrant reader. Even such Bibles would not escape the touch of error, for they would be exposed to all our mistakes of interpretation. As we read them, our human limitations would affect our understanding. One, indeed, did live who could truly say of God, "I know Him"; but the gospels record the misunderstandings of His nearest disciples. He said at the very end of His ministry, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me?" They did their best, and the four biographers who tell us about them and about Him, did their best. But it was an imperfect best. It had to be, in the nature of things. Their very language was of necessity inadequate and inaccurate for the statement of divine truth. And their experience was too limited, their

minds too small, their power of appreciation too weak, to grasp the fullness of the truth.

The dismay and unrest which followed the perception of this obvious fact about the Bible were caused by the necessity thus presented to give up a theory which had long prevailed. So urgent had been the teachers of this theory that it was gravely declared and accepted that any kind of error anywhere from Genesis to Revelation would destroy the authority of the whole long series of sacred books. If an historian in the book of Judges mistook the number of men killed in a skirmish, and could be convicted of his error, the visions of Isaiah and the doctrines of St. Paul were thereby invalidated. As a matter of fact, the discovery of an error was fatal only to the theory of inerrancy.

Now that the discovery has been made, and the Bible men are seen to be liable to mistakes like other men, the result is simply to establish the obvious human element in

the book. As for its authority, it is no more weakened than the authority of science, of history, of law, or of experience. None of these guides of thought and conduct is refused because of the fact of error. That is taken for granted. On the whole, they bring us truth; subject, of course, to their limitations and to ours; but truth, nevertheless, according to which we may direct our believing and our living. So with the Bible.

When, therefore, the child asks, "Is that true?" the teacher of the Bible may answer with all frankness. If he doubts that the historian got the number right when he said that Samson with the jawbone of an ass slew a thousand men, no calamity will follow when he replies, "I think not." The truth is in the might of Samson, not in the details of his adventures. And the same principle holds when the child asks, "Was that right?" Was it right in the psalmist to desire to wash his footsteps in the blood of

the ungodly, and to have the tongue of his dogs red through the same? A thousand times No. That was simply as far as they had got at that time along the road of conduct. To-day, taught as we are by wiser teachers, even by Christ Himself, we know better.

What becomes, then, of the old ideas of inspiration and of revelation?

They remain fundamentally true. They belong still, as they always belonged, to the realms of mystery. Some change of statement has resulted from beginning the study of these matters with a different question. Our fathers sometimes began by asking, "In what way would God be likely to transmit and to safeguard His truth?" The reply to this question defined inspiration and revelation in terms of the divine power. To-day we ask, "How are we to understand inspiration and revelation as they are disclosed in the writings which have been produced under these conditions?" That is,

we start not with the power but with the product, and our inquiry is concerned to determine not what God might have done, but what God actually did. Inspiration and revelation are thus the influences which result in such a book as this. Instead of beginning with the divine cause and deciding theoretically what the effect of such a cause ought to be, we begin with the effect itself as it actually is. We start with the facts as they are.

Approaching the matter from this side, we find ourselves less disposed than formerly to put our doctrines into definitions. The new approach increases rather than diminishes the mystery in which the making of the Bible is involved. We perceive, however, that instead of being singularly and separately mysterious, and thus out of relation with the rest of our life, the Bible belongs to that universal environment of mystery out of which every great achievement comes. Thus we define inspiration

as akin to genius, and revelation as akin to discovery.

Here is one who, by the grace of God, is uncommonly sensitive to certain aspects of the world about him. He feels more than we do, and hears and sees more than we do. He is singularly aware of form and color, and is able to interpret the beauty of the world in works of art. He shows us wonders which we did not know. Or he is singularly appreciative of human nature, looks with a new clearness of vision into the souls of men, interprets what they do and mean, and tells us in the language of poetry. Or he has the gift of understanding nature, of perceiving combinations of materials and forces which have never been combined before, and of getting results which contribute both to science and to life. These men are different from us. When we endeavor to explain them, when we try to account for the unusual ability which is in them, we say that they are men of genius.

This does not by any means define them. It only expresses our sense of the mystery of their achievements. When we take this over into the realm of religion, we perceive that here too is genius. Here are men who are markedly sensitive to the unseen and eternal, who see with altogether uncommon plainness the subtle difference between right and wrong; for whom the bush by the road, which we pass without looking at it, blazes with the fire of God; who are aware of God. These men are able to hear the voice of God. One of them, with a group of ordinary persons, being on the way to Damascus, suddenly sees a vision in the sky and receives a message from heaven; the others, being ordinary persons, are aware only of thunder and lightning. This sensitiveness and receptiveness, which in art and letters and science is called genius, is in religion called inspiration. Men thus inspired wrote the Bible.

Suddenly, to one and another man of

genius, comes the discovery of something absolutely new. He finds a new force or a new principle or a new law. It is not the conclusion of a process of research or of reasoning, though these are in relation with it. He did not anticipate it. He had no idea that morning that any great new understanding of the world would enter into his mind. He cannot explain it. Of a sudden, as by a voice from the unseen, the explanation came. It flashed upon him. Thus Newton discovered the principle of gravitation, and Darwin discovered the principle of evolution. They were men of genius, and thus were qualified to receive the new truth when it came, but it came as mysteriously as a miracle. Then they took it and revolutionized the thought of the world. In religion, this is called revelation. Thus to Abraham, in the Bible, came a new consciousness of the unity of God, and to Moses a new consciousness of the will of God, and to Hosea a new con-

sciousness of the love of God. These truths they perceived suddenly, not as the conclusion of an argument. They did not merely conjecture them; they knew them. They said that they heard God speaking and telling them these things. That was their manner of describing an experience which was indescribable. Without their will, without the conscious operation of their mind, suddenly they were in possession of new truth. And this new truth they immediately declared to other men. They were appointed the messengers of God. They preached and wrote the word of God. The proclamation and application of such new truth constitutes the Bible.

Inspiration and revelation, thus defined in terms of genius and discovery, retain all their ancient mystery. The difference is that they are no longer separate from the conditions of our life. They are seen to be a vital part of God's universal dealing with mankind.

As for the miraculous, which presents a further difficulty in the explanation of the Bible, our feeling about it is somewhat affected by a change of emphasis. Many people used to think of God as remote from the world, having indeed made it and set it going, but thereafter entering into its affairs mainly by the medium of miracle. Miracle, accordingly, was the manifestation and assurance of God. Thus the minimizing of the miraculous was an attack upon the only testimony which we had to the divine existence. How can we know that God is, unless He exercises His unmistakable will in our behalf? But we perceive now that the will of God in our behalf is exercised in all the common phenomena of life. God, instead of being detached from the world, is in the midst of it, "in Whom we live and move and have our being." The old antithesis between God and Nature is seen to be untenable. Nature is the order and custom and dependable will of

God. God is manifested all the time, in all the world. The argument for God is not a remote and ancient miracle, or record of miracles, but the ever-acting providence whose revelation is the world itself. The heavens declare the glory of God not only and not chiefly when a storm breaks awfully on the heights of Sinai, but when the sun shines by day and the stars by night over our own heads.

We are no longer nervous, then, at any questioning of the reality of a miracle. We do not feel that we must maintain the miraculous character of the event, or else lose hold on the reality of God. We are not greatly distressed by the suggestion that the miracle may be in the mind of the recorder rather than in the fact itself: he thought he saw a miracle, and said so, but another explanation is possible. When the children are incredulous about the swimming of the ax-head, we may be perfectly frank in our reply. If we doubt that the

ax-head swam, there is no prudential reason why we should not say so.

At the same time, there are two things to be had in mind. One is that the marvelous appeals naturally to children, and does not for a long time awaken any question. The thing to do is to tell the Bible story as it is told in the Bible. The fact that the assertion that Joshua made the sun and moon stand still is a quotation from a book of poetry, and is to be understood as poetry, need not be made in the nursery. There is no need of it. That comes later. At present, let the courageous captain lift his hand to heaven and stop the whole machinery of the universe, till he gets the victory over his enemies. Why not?

The other thing to be remembered is that the miraculous and the personality of God are bound up together. The miraculous is God's immediate dealing with human life. They erred, indeed, who held that a miracle is a violation of a law of nature. A mir-

acle is a divine direction of a law of nature for our individual good. Thus at the Red Sea, God did not spread out a magic carpet and upon it transport the host of Israel from one shore to the other. The record says that He used a strong east wind. In a miracle, God's will enters into the customary order of events as our own will does when we summon a physician to minister to the sick.

But such an act of will belongs of necessity to our conception of God as caring for us His children. We assert our belief in it whenever we say our prayer. The idea of a purely impersonal and universal dealing of God with men, having no regard for any individual, going straight on with the impartiality, the inexorable certainty, of a law of nature, careless of our entreaties, regardless of our needs and distresses, is wholly out of accord with the fatherhood of God as taught by Jesus Christ. Our most reasonable procedure, then, is to bring the

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miracles of the Bible into relation with our present life; as is now easy in the matter of the miracles of healing. We are to maintain that God is as near to the world, and as concerned with our affairs as He ever was, and that miracles are forever happening, in the lives of nations and of individuals. Only, in the old time, they perceived the hand of God more clearly than we do. They went straight back through the minor causes, through the means which God used, to the will of God Himself. We are to emphasize the naturalness of the supernatural. We are to assert the constant, helping and guiding and protecting presence of God in the affairs of men, both in and out of the pages of the Bible.

CHAPTER XI

A HOUSEHOLD LECTIONARY

THE difficulties which attend the instruction of children in the Bible arise not only from the nature of the book but from the variety of its contents. Some parents, with the best intentions, open the Bible and turn the pages in this direction and in that, and are uncertain what to read. They find themselves in confusion. They are honestly desirous to make their children acquainted with this supreme book of the Spirit, but they do not know how to set about it. The result is that they begin somewhere and go on, either in order or at random, for a few days, and then stop. For in the carrying out of this intention, there is need of both system and intelligence. We want a lectionary,

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wherein shall be set down day by day, and chapter by chapter, the most fitting and effective readings.

A proper preparation for any course of Bible reading with young children is a book of Bible stories. For the Bible as it stands was not written for children. Neither the language nor the thought is adapted to their understanding. It must be translated into their vocabulary, and must be simplified and explained. The impulse to take exception to this statement is based on such stories as that of Joseph in the Old Testament and of the Prodigal Son in the New, which seem to defy alteration. It is true that parts of the Bible may be read, even to young children, with interest and profit. Such passages, however, form but a small portion of the whole, and are themselves made more real by some comment of the reader. Unless we are careful, we shall find that the "swine" which were fed by the Prodigal Son are regarded by the child as

a species of sacred animal to care for which was a kind of holy privilege. Only by translation does he associate them with the pigs of the sty. The greater part of the Bible needs some illumination even for grown folks: hence the commentaries, the classes and the sermon. The function of a book of Bible stories is to provide such interpretation for little boys and girls.¹

When the child comes to an age such as invites an introduction to the Bible itself,—a period which differs greatly among different children,—there are two kinds of occasions for which provision will naturally be made. There will be long readings for Sunday afternoons, and there will be short readings for daily prayers or for bedtime. There will also be a selection of sentences and passages to be committed to memory.

The long readings may be taken in order from some edition of the Bible which has

¹ The writer of this book has prepared two such volumes: *The Garden of Eden*, and *When the King Came*.

been prepared for children; such as the "Bible for Young People," or "The Old, Old Story Book." In these books the genealogies are omitted, duplicated narratives are combined, and passages unsuitable for the reading of children are left out. Thus the Bible may be read through, taking a year to it, and then reading it again. Or the long reading may be the Sunday-school lesson for the following Sunday, read and studied by parents and children together. Often, the lesson books or papers suggest short readings in connection with the Sunday chapter, which may be used day by day throughout the week.

Or else, going straight to the Bible without either of these guides, a household lectionary may be constructed according to which the Scriptures may be regularly read. The particular plan is of little importance. The necessary thing is the definite selection and adoption of some plan, and the following of it week by week.

In the making of a domestic lectionary, the long readings will naturally be taken from the narrative portions of the book. They will tell the great stories and make the boys and girls acquainted with the great people. Such selections may carry the Bible history through the whole year, following the course of events from Abraham to Paul. In that case, it is a good plan to spend half of the year in reading the Old Testament, and the other half in reading the New. The festivals of Christmas and Easter, marking the beginning and the end of our Lord's earthly life, make the winter and spring especially appropriate for the New Testament. The reading may begin on a Sunday about the middle of December, thus leading up to Christmas, and preparing the children to enter with understanding and appreciation into the meaning of the day. Then the Old Testament may be taken in the summer.

A single narrative, in two books, covers

the whole New Testament history. St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles are by the same writer, as the dedications show. This narrative may be taken as the connecting document of a course of reading. Six months may profitably be spent in reading these two books aloud on Sunday afternoons, from the middle of December till the middle of May. The readings in the Gospel may be profitably accompanied, according to the capacity of the children, by side readings from the other gospels where the same story is told with slight, but often very significant variations, or where new matter is added. And, similarly, the readings in the Acts may be illustrated and enriched by passages from the Epistles.

It is important, for the understanding of children, that the main divisions of the history be made clear. The studying of short lessons without very plain connection, and the hearing of sermons which explain texts without much interpretation of the books

in which they stand, hide from many children the progress of the New Testament narrative. Of course, an obvious division is in two parts, one represented by the Gospel, being the story of the life of Christ, and the other represented by the Acts, being the story of the beginning of the Church. But each of these has its distinct periods, which ought to be recognized.

Thus the life of Christ is in four parts, of quite unequal length: 1, The Thirty Years; 2, The Ministry; 3, The Holy Week; 4, The Forty Days. And the Ministry is in three divisions (following here the notes of time in the Gospel of St. John):
1. To the first Passover, a period of about six months, mainly in Judæa; 2, to the second Passover, a period of a year, mainly in Capernaum and the neighborhood; 3, to the third Passover, a period of a year, spent in wandering, outside the Holy Land, north and east, but including two visits to Jerusalem. One of the first things to do

is to locate these main landmarks. Thus in St. Luke's Gospel, the record of the Thirty Years is in the first two chapters; the Ministry is in the chapters from the third to the middle of the nineteenth; the Holy Week is described in the chapters from that point to the twenty-third; the Forty Days are recounted in the twenty-fourth. As for the Ministry, the first period is in chapters third and fourth; the second period in chapters fifth to the middle of the ninth; the third period from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the nineteenth.

Also, the book of the Acts is in two portions: 1, The acts of St. Peter and his companions, in the chapters from the first to the twelfth; 2, The acts of St. Paul and his companions, in the chapters from the thirteenth to the end. The first part is in three divisions: 1, Preparation, including the Ascension and the Day of Pentecost, first and second chapters; 2, Contention,

from the excitement caused by the healing of the lame man to the persecution which began with the stoning of Stephen, chapters third to seventh; 3, Evangelization, being the preaching of the gospel which followed, in Samaria and as far as Cæsarea, chapters eighth to twelfth. And the second part is in two parts: 1, St. Paul the missionary, in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia Minor, chapters thirteenth to the middle of the twenty-first; 2, St. Paul the prisoner, including his arrest at Jerusalem, and imprisonment in Cæsarea, his shipwreck, and his final imprisonment in Rome, in the remaining chapters.

A similar marking of the main divisions of the narrative is to be made in the Old Testament. First comes the Era of the Beginnings, from Genesis to Ruth; including the patriarchs from Adam to Joseph, Moses and the escape of the people out of Egypt, and the conquest and settlement of Canaan under Joshua and the Judges. Then fol-

lows the Era of the Kings, from Samuel to Chronicles; first, the united kingdom, under Saul and David and Solomon; then the fortunes of the kingdom of Israel until the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians (II Kings 17), and the fortunes of the kingdom of Judah until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans (II Chronicles 36). The history ends with the Era of the Foreign Rulers, in Ezra and Nehemiah; including the exile and the restoration. The latter portions may be illuminated by readings from the prophets.

Such a lectionary for Sunday readings, following these divisions, is here offered as a suggestion for domestic use. It begins with the Life of Christ and the Acts of the Apostles arranged for half a year. Then follows the Old Testament History in two parts, each for a half year. Thus, the New Testament narrative being read one year, say from the middle of December till the middle of May, the Old Testament would

be taken up at that point and the readings till December would be in the Era of the Beginnings. The next year the Gospels and the Acts would be read over again, and the Old Testament passages would be taken from the Era of the Kings and the Era of the Foreign Rulers. Changes will of course be made to suit the needs of individual children; there will be additions and subtractions. But the initial necessity is to begin with something detailed and definite. Such a plan is here presented.

The Life of Christ

- I. The thirty years. Luke 1, 2. (Matt. 1, 2.) [1]
- II. The ministry.
 - I. First period.
 - (1) The baptism and temptation. Luke 3: 1-4: 13. (Matt. 3: 1-4: 11. Mark 1: 1-13.) [2]
 - (2) The first disciples. Luke 5: 1-11. (Matt. 4: 12-25. Mark 1: 14-20. John 1-4.) [3]

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2. Second period.
- (1) The ministry of mercy. [4
Luke 4:33-44; 5:12-26;
6:6-11; 7:1-17; 8:22-56.
(Matt. 8, 9. Mark 1:20-
2:12; 3:12. John 5.)]
 - (2) The training of the twelve. Luke 6:12-19. [5
(Matt. 10. Mark 3:13-
19.)]
 - (3) The sermon on the mount. [6
Luke 6:20-49. (Matt. 5-
7.)]
 - (4) The parables of the kingdom. Luke 8:4-18. (Matt.
13. Mark 4.) [7]
 - (5) The crisis at Capernaum. [8
Luke 9:7-17. (Matt. 14:
1-15:20. Mark 6:1-7:
23. John 6.)]
3. Third period.
- (1) Among the Gentiles. Luke [9
9:18-45. (Matt. 15:21-
17:23. Mark 7:24-9:32.)]
 - (2) In Jerusalem. John 7-10. [10]
 - (3) In Peræa. Luke 9:51- [11
17:10. (John 11.)]
 - (4) The last journey. Luke [12

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17: 11-19: 28. (Matt. 19:
3-20: 34. Mark 10: 2-52.
John 11: 55-12: 11.)

III. The Holy Week. Luke 19: 29-23: [13
56. (Matt. 21-27. Mark
11-15. John 12: 12-19:
42.)

IV. The Forty Days. Luke 24, with [14
Acts 1. (Matt. 28. Mark
16. John 20, 21.)

The Acts of the Apostles.

I. St. Peter and his companions.

1. Preparation. Acts 1-3. [15]
2. Contention. 4-7. [16]
3. Evangelization. 8-12. [17]

II. St. Paul and his companions.

1. In Galatia. 13-15. (Gal. 1:
11-2: 21.) [18]
2. In Macedonia. 16: 1-17: 15. [19]
(Phil. 4: 10-20. I Thes. 2:
1-2.)
3. In Athens and Corinth. 17: [20
16-18; 17 (I Cor. 2: 1-5.)
4. In Ephesus. 18: 19-19: 41. [21]
5. On the way to Jerusalem. 20: [22
1-21: 17.]
6. In Jerusalem. 21: 17-23: 11. [23]

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7. In Cæsarea. 23: 12-26: 32. [24]
8. The Shipwreck. 27: 1-28: 10. [25]
9. In Rome. 28: 11-31 (II Tim. 4: 6-18.) [26]

Old Testament History (I)

I. The Era of the Beginnings.

1. The beginning of sin.

(1) The Garden of Eden. Gen. 2: 4-3: 24.

(2) The Flood. Gen. 6-8. [2]

2. The beginning of salvation.

(1) The call of Abraham. [3]
Gen. 12: 1-9; 13: 1-14.

(2) The destruction of Sodom. [4]
Gen. 18, 19: 12-28.

(3) Ishmael and Isaac. Gen. [5]
21: 1-20; 22: 1-19.

(4) The Wooing of Rebekah. [6]
Gen. 24.

(5) Jacob and Esau. Gen. [7]
25: 27-34; Gen. 27: 41; 28:
10-22; 29: 1-14.

(6) Jacob and Pharaoh. Gen. [8]
37, 40, 41.

(7) Joseph and his brethren. [9]
Gen. 42.

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3. The deliverance from Egypt.

- (1) The call of Moses. Ex. [10
1:8-3:12.]
- (2) The plagues. Ex. 5-10. [11]
- (3) The Passover. Ex. 11, [12
12.]
- (4) The crossing of the Red Sea. Ex. 14, 15. [13]
- (5) Bread and water. Ex. [14
15-17.]
- (6) The Ten Commandments. [15
Ex. 19, 20.]
- (7) Balaam and Balak. Num. [16
22-24.]

4. The conquest of Canaan.

- (1) The fall of Jericho. Jos. [17
2, 3:10-4:9, 6.]
- (2) The sin of Achan. Jos. [18
7, 8.]
- (3) The story of the sun and moon. Jos. 9, 10. [19]
- (4) The battle of the river Kishon. Jud. 4, 5. [20]
..
- (5) The battle of the lamps and pitchers. Jud. 6, 7. [21]
- (6) The fable of Jotham. [22
Jud. 9.]

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- (7) Jephthah and his daughter. Jud. 11. [23]
- (8) The exploits of Samson. Jud. 13-16. [24]
- (9) The migration of Dan. Jud. 17, 18. [25]
- (10) The story of Ruth. Ruth 1-4. [26]

Old Testament History (II)

II. The Era of the Kings.

- 1. The founding of the Hebrew kingdom.
 - (1) Samuel and Saul.
 - a. The call of Samuel. I [1] Sam. 1-3.
 - b. The journey of the ark. I [2] Sam. 4-6.
 - c. The anointing of Saul. I [3] Sam. 8-11.
 - (2) Saul and David.
 - a. David and Goliath. I [4] Sam. 16, 17.
 - b. David and Jonathan. I [5] Sam. 20, 21.
 - c. The witch of Endor. I [6] Sam. 28, 31.

d. The ark brought to Jerusalem. II Sam. 6, 7. [7]

e. The rebellion of Absalom. II Sam. 15: 1-17; 16: 1-14; 18. [8]

(3) The reign of Solomon.

a. The crowning of Solomon. I Kings 1: 5-53. [9]

b. The wisdom of Solomon. I Kings 3, 4: 29-34. [10]

c. The temple of Solomon. I Kings 5, 6. [10]

2. The division of the Hebrew kingdom.

(1) The revolution.

a. Jeroboam the patriot. I Kings 11: 26-12: 20. [12]

b. The prophet and the lion. I Kings 13. [13]

(2) Prophets and kings of Israel.

a. Elijah and the drought. I Kings 17, 18, 19. [14]

b. Elijah and Naboth's vineyard. I Kings 21. [15]

c. The ministry of Elisha. II Kings 2: 1-14, 5, 6: 24-7. [16]

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d. The rebellion of Jehu. II [17
Kings 9: 1-10: 28.

e. The mission of Jonah. [18
Jonah 1-4.

(3) Prophets and Kings of Ju-
dah.

a. The tragedy of Athaliah. [19
II Kings 11, 12.

b. The Assyrian invasion. II [20
Kings 18, 19.

c. Josiah the reformer. II [21
Kings 22, 23.

d. The protests of Jeremiah. [22
Jer. 36-38.

3. The destruction of the Hebrew kingdom. II Kings 17: 1-8;
24, 25.

III. The Era of the Foreign Rulers.

1. The constancy of Daniel. Dan. [24
3-6.

2. The story of Esther. Esther 1- [25
10.

3. The return from exile. Neh. 2- [26
4, 6.

The purpose of these long readings is to give children some knowledge of that history which lies back of all our literature

and is taken for granted in sermons. They are to be made familiar with the courage of pioneers and captains, with the general course of events, with the constancy of martyrs. In the earlier years, the chapters may be read without much comment, except such as is suggested by the questions of the children. It is well, however, even then, to make the progress plain, as in the English and American history which they are studying at school. It is well, also, to keep them in mind of the fact that the difference between those old times and our own is not so much in the events as in the description of the events. God is quite as near to-day to all the nations of the earth as He was to the people of Israel; but our modern histories are not so devoutly written. If the chroniclers who wrote about the kings of Judah could write now about the Presidents of the United States, they would do it in the same way. They would perceive the constant presence of God.

When the time of serious questioning comes, there will be need of patience, of humility, of honesty and of reverence. By reverence I mean a certain refinement of nature and appraisal of spiritual values which will deter parents from telling stories of the queer things which children say. It may be unnecessary to set up a fast rule of silence in these matters, but there should be a sense of sacred confidence between the parent and the child which will take most of these anecdotes out of ordinary conversation. By honesty I mean that the parents should be loyal to their own convictions and unscared by the truth. If they believe that the narrative of the speaking serpent in the garden of innocence is a story rather than a history, and belongs to poetry and theology rather than to scientific accounts of the habits of serpents, why not say so? When the child asks, "Is it true?" the best answer may be, "Yes, it is true; but as the parable of the Good Samaritan is true. The par-

able of the Good Samaritan is probably not a description of an historical event, but a story told to teach a great lesson. That is its meaning and its value. The story of the Garden of Eden teaches that sin came into the world by man's disobedience. And that is true absolutely." Such questioning as this, however, does not readily occur to young children. To them, the world is filled with wonder, all things are possible, anything may happen. Out of this stage of intellectual progress they come by slow and normal processes into some understanding of the regularity of the universe. There is no gain in hastening this change, or in explaining difficulties before they actually arise. Commonly, the child will attend to all that himself.

To other qualities, even of domestic instruction, may properly be added some measure of scholarship. There can hardly be much effective teaching without some studying. For a single comprehensive

book, nothing is better than the one-volume edition of Hastings' Bible Dictionary (Charles Scribner's Sons). Of course, the five-volume edition is better, but this will suffice in most families for the history, the geography, and the general interpretation of the Bible.

The shorter readings, such as may be used at family prayers, or daily read by the child out of his own book, will be for the purpose of admonition and inspiration. The guidance which the longer readings will give him by example appears in these briefer passages by precept. The most helpful books for this purpose are the Proverbs and the Psalms. One is practical, the other is emotional; one is full of morality, the other of prayer and praise. Each of them contains sentences which express a conception of God or of duty such as we have now outgrown, but these are easily set aside in the reading: as Mr. Moody advised, comparing them to the bones when one eats

fish. The child will be taught to take such sayings as really appeal to him, and appropriate them, letting the rest go.

To these books which may be read steadily through, a little every day, may be added certain great chapters out of other Bible writings:—The Story of Job, as told in the first and last chapters; the Praise of Wisdom (Job 28), the Making of the World (Job 38, 39), Behemoth and Leviathan (Job 40: 15-41:34); the Time of the Singing of Birds (Song of Solomon 2); these passages in Isaiah:—The Mountain of the Lord (2: 2-4), the Reign of Peace (11:1-9), the Fall of Babylon (13, 14), the Return to Zion (35), Comfort Ye My People (40), the Bringers of Good Tidings (52:1-10), the Man of Sorrows (53), Ho, Every One That Thirsteth (55), Arise, Shine (60:1-20), the Preacher of Good Tidings (61); the Love of God (Hosea 14:4-9), the March of the Locusts (Joel 1, 2), the Prayer of Habakkuk.

And in the New Testament:—the Flesh and the Spirit (Romans 8), the Living Sacrifice (Romans 12), the Praise of Charity (I Cor. 13), the Praise of Faith (Heb. 11: 1–12: 2), the Love of Christ (Eph. 3), the Armor of God (Eph. 6: 10–18), the Resurrection of the Dead (I Cor. 15), We Faint Not (II Cor. 4), the Heavenly House (II Cor. 5: 1–10), the Peace of God (Phil. 4: 1–8), Pure Religion (James 1), the Saints in Glory (Rev. 7: 9–17), the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21, 22). These and other notable selections are taken from the Scriptures and printed by themselves in a book entitled, “Passages of the Bible, Chosen for Their Literary Beauty and Interest” (Adam and Charles Black).

The Gospel of St. John is a treasury of such golden sentences, and the Sermon on the Mount is to be read repeatedly. The Beatitudes will be learned by heart, and the Golden Rule (Matth. 7: 12), and the Royal Law (James 2: 8), and the New Command-

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ment (John 13:34). The short readings will suggest other passages. The last chapters of most of the epistles of St. Paul contain counsels of the greatest value for the living of the common life. Here the profound doctrines are applied immediately to conduct. And these admonitions and directions are such as we still need in order to live aright.

CHAPTER XII

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER

SOMETIMES the whole matter of the training of children in religion is committed by the parents to the church school. This is of necessity the case where the parents themselves are confessedly incapable, or are out of sympathy with religion; and it is true in those neighborhoods where the unit of the parish is no longer the family but the individual. In these crowded communities life is impoverished of one of the elements which belong to the normal conduct of households,—the element of privacy. The blessed opportunities of quiet conversation and confidence between parents and children are either infrequent or lacking altogether. Peaceful evenings are impossible. Sunday afternoon

is like any other afternoon, as Sunday is like any other day. Inherited religious habits, under these conditions, have a hard fight for life; and though they are sometimes kept, with great courage and patience, they are in evident need of reinforcement. To such families the Sunday-school teacher who is faithful and competent is a benediction. By instruction on Sunday, by visitation during the week, by the influence of precept and example, a teacher in such circumstances meets a serious demand.

Indeed, under almost any conditions, even when the child is happily instructed at home, the school is intended to satisfy a need which the home cannot supply. The child who is taught only by his parents may be better informed, but he lacks the institutional and social spirit which is imparted in a good school. He is in peril of individualism, whose intellectual defect is narrowness, and whose religious defect is selfishness. It is good for the child to become a

part of the corporate life of the parish, to share in the various benefactions and philanthropies which are carried on by the school, and thus to learn early in life to consider the good of his neighbors, and the welfare of the kingdom of God. Otherwise, he may be like a soldier who has learned war by correspondence, and has never kept step with a file of men, nor obeyed the impersonal orders of a captain.

Moreover, a good teacher will say some things more efficiently than even a good mother. The mother speaks with a certain timidity and nervousness, which is the natural result of her deep affection and of her correspondingly deep desire for the child's good. The teacher is often able to speak more easily, naturally and persuasively. It depends, however, on the teacher. The wise parents take pains to know to whose class John or Mary has been assigned, and to make the teacher's acquaintance. A foolish, idle, ignorant, prejudiced, or other-

wise incompetent teacher may make a difference in the whole religious life of the child.

A good teacher possesses, in greater or less degree, nine points of excellence. The first is punctuality. The faithful teacher will be unfailingly present and unfailingly prompt. One of the reasons for the nervous prostration of the clergy is the unpunctuality of Sunday-school teachers. They are a hindering influence in the endeavor to set forward the life of the spirit. They pull back.

For unpunctuality includes a multitude of sins. The unpunctual teacher is lacking in the ability of discipline. He is deficient in that sense of order which is at the heart of all control. Even if he is able to manage a class under normal conditions he begins with a disadvantage. He has permitted the class to make the first move. He has given them that which in football is called the attack. In football, and in war,

and in discipline of any kind, even in a class in Sunday-school, the odds are on the side of the attack. When the teacher arrives upon the scene, the scholars have already opened the hour's proceedings. In most cases, youthful human nature being what it is, they have established a situation of cheerful disorder. They have begun in a spirit which is indifferent both to the service and to the lesson. The tardy teacher must regain a rocky mile of lost ground. And this he rarely succeeds in doing. The mental and moral defects which make him habitually late prevent him from taking the command. The wise teacher precedes the pupils. When they get to their seats they find him there already, prepared to receive them one by one into an association for the promoting of good order.

The unpunctual teacher is commonly deficient not only in the ability of discipline but in the sense of duty. He is not obedient to the commands of conscience. He is

not attentive to the inner voice. He will cheerfully take a class, if he is asked to do so, but he seems not to understand that this acceptance imposes any serious responsibility upon him. He accepts as if it were an invitation to an afternoon tea, and if the weather is fair and no other social opportunity intervenes, he goes. The tombstone of Mary Lyon, in the midst of the beautiful grounds of the college which she founded, bears these words: "There is nothing in the universe that I fear but that I shall not know all my duty, or shall fail to do it." It is an admirable expression of the Puritan conscience. Such a sentence will never be written on the tombstone of an unpunctual teacher.

The ability of discipline and the sense of duty are initial and essential to the work of the teacher. Without the sense of duty, he cannot be depended on to be present; without the ability of discipline, he may not be of much use even if he is present. And

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both of these qualities are inherent in the grace of punctuality.

To punctuality, the good teacher will add the virtue of cheerfulness. The scholar comes and finds the punctual teacher in his place: so far, so good. But what does the teacher look like? For punctuality has its besetting defects. It is sometimes a forbidding excellence, akin to primness, sister to severity.

The good teacher has a bright face. All good Christians are good looking: not, perhaps, from the point of view of the photographer, or of the novelist who is in search of a hero or a heroine for his novel, but in the eyes of all discerning persons. The teacher, who for the moment represents the Christian religion, ought of all people to have a cheerful countenance. That is a vital part of his instruction. St. Paul showed his profound knowledge of human nature when he enjoined those who show mercy to do it with cheerfulness. He knew

very well how the long face, the somber manner, the artificial pathos and piety of some benevolent persons spoil their gifts. There is a look in the faces of some of the people who are seen in public on Sunday carrying limp-covered Bibles under their arms, which is an argument against the Christian religion. The natural man beholding such disciples says within himself, "From this religion, good Lord, deliver us!"

It is true that the warning, "Be not righteous overmuch," is written in the book of Ecclesiastes, which is not the best book in the Bible. Of course, if we take righteousness to mean simple interior goodness, it is not possible to be righteous overmuch,—except, perhaps, for the advantage of one's material interests. It is quite possible, however, to be righteous overmuch in the matter of expression. There is an offensive goodness which defeats its own purposes. It is highly desirable, in order to effective

instruction, that the Sunday-school teacher be a human being; and the children ought to be assured of that encouraging fact by the teacher's behavior.

The lasting lesson is taught by the personality of the teacher. The words are forgotten, but the face is remembered. And the teacher's face and manner proclaim the results of religion. What will religion do for us? What sort of persons will it make of us? These questions unexpressed are in the hearts of the scholars. If they see that religion makes the teacher pessimistic, nervous, narrow-minded, cross and complaining, they will be prejudiced against it. The teacher may teach the creed of Christian satisfaction, and may sing the songs of everlasting salvation, and may set for golden texts the most jubilant sentences of spiritual cheer, but all will be of no effect unless he himself is honestly hopeful, happy, merry and joyful. It is true that the preacher in the pulpit is impeded by a general disap-

probation of humorous sermons; but there is no such impediment in the Sunday-school. The lesson begins well when teacher and scholars laugh together.

One of the offices of cheerfulness is to act as an ambassador of sympathy. The good teacher will add to his punctuality cheerfulness, and to his cheerfulness sympathy. For all true teaching commences with the establishment of a point of contact. It is happily said that the mind is like a social club: no new idea is admitted unless introduced by a member. Accordingly, the teacher who would bring a new thought into a child's mind must first acquaint himself with the ideas which dwell in the child's mind already. He must ask at the door of the mind for a thought which is a member there in good and regular standing, and when this thought appears he must present the stranger and ask for him the hospitalities of the place.

Thus there are boys' minds which have

absolutely no use for David as either king or poet. There is not a king or a poet in their club. But they will give that illustrious sovereign and minstrel the glad hand of a boy's friendship when they learn that he could throw a stone straighter than anybody else in his neighborhood, though even this may be an insufficient introduction to boys in crowded cities where the yards are covered with brick and the woods with concrete. Joab, too, comes out of the dim haze of a complicated chronicle and appears in a new and very favorable light when he is presented as the soldier who climbed up on hands and knees, under the cover of the night, along the watercourse into the besieged city on the cliff, and opened the gates to the besiegers. Such an adventure appeals at once to the instinctive admiration of youth.

Remember how St. Paul began his sermon at Athens by touching at once the point of contact. He saw that there was not in

his congregation a single person who was acquainted with the Old Testament religion. At Antioch, being asked to speak, he had held up his hand and said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken," and then he had proceeded to remind his hearers how the God of Israel chose their fathers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led them forth out of it. That manner of address was admirable at Antioch, but it would not do at Athens. "My friends," he says, addressing the Athenians, "I perceive that you are a very religious people, for as I passed along the street I saw an altar, which you have erected to the Unknown God. Listen now while I bring you tidings of the Unknown God." You see how, both at Athens and at Antioch, he began with ideas which were already accepted by the people, and made the old thoughts usher in the new. Indeed, the Incarnation itself is an illustration of the divine use of this pedagogic method. It establishes a point of contact

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between God and man. It proceeds by sympathy. God enters into human life that He may thereby address us in our own language, and may approach us with the appeal of a common experience.

The teacher must know the scholar. He must know his name, and his residence, and his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters. He must know what he is studying between nine and four o'clock, and what he is playing between four and six. He must be aware on Sunday what interesting events in the scholar's world have taken place on Saturday. If he knows the score of yesterday's game, and is able to appreciate the fine points of the play which won it, he is in possession of facts such as no lexicon can supply. He is able to follow in the steps of Kingsley, who said, "I begin with that which is interesting them, and thus lead them to the things which are of interest to me." Such knowledge of domestic conditions, of current recreation, of

the actual concerns of boys and girls, belongs in the best sense to the department of vital statistics. It deals with living facts. It is a revelation of human life. This knowledge is acquired in the homes of the children. The good teacher begins his study of the lesson not with the Bible but with the class. His is like the good physician whose first inquiry is about the patient; thus he is able to select the remedies which fit the case. He begins by learning the class. Otherwise he will share the failure of the dull preacher of whom it was said that he was more interested in the truth than he was in the people. If he persists in studying the books without reference to the boys, he may come to deserve the hard description of the parson who was said to be invisible six days of the week and incomprehensible on the seventh. The two conditions go together.

First punctuality, then cheerfulness, then sympathy, then patience. The good teacher

is very patient. He meets ignorance and indifference, but he is not surprised. He finds scholars who know nothing, and are content to know nothing. They make no response to his approaches. At first, he can do nothing with them. Then he remembers that the Master sent the disciples to be fishers of men, and he reflects that nobody can be a successful fisherman without being very patient. The fisherman waits, and waits, and still waits. That is a recognized part of his day's work and play. He tries experiments. Now he invites the fish by trolling, now by casting the fly. Now he offers a grasshopper, then a worm, after that a frog. The height of his skill is exercised in discovering what will attract the fish. Indeed, he scorns the easy fish. He loves the shy bass which hides in the shadows of the rocks, and which when he feels the hook fights long and hard. The teacher is intent on catching boys and girls. And the fisherman is his example. He is

everlastingly patient. It is his particular joy to try the indifferent, the elusive, the hostile child with new kinds of bait. And he expects little.

Children have little intuitive respect for persons or for places. They do not understand why they should keep silence in the church. They perceive no incongruity between kneeling and whispering. They take so readily to ritual that even their parents are sometimes deceived, but there is very little relation in their minds between ritual and religion. They are not irreverent; they are only unreverent. Religious reverence is at heart a perception of the presence of God. The wise teacher knows by his own experience that this perception is of slow growth, and, even in the saints, is intermittent. He understands, and makes allowance.

The wise teacher is not easily shocked by the unrest or by the unconscious impertinence of children. He listens to the child's

queer notions about God, as the father or mother overhears the child's confidential communication with God, reflecting meanwhile upon various passages in the lives of the patriarchs. Abraham and Moses both took it upon themselves to admonish the Eternal; they instructed the Judge of all the earth in the difference between right and wrong. "Jehovah said unto Moses, 'How long will this people despise Me? and how long will they not believe in Me for all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they.' And Moses said unto Jehovah, 'Then the Egyptians will hear it!'" The Egyptians will hear it, and say, "Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness." And Moses reminded Jehovah that He had promised to be slow to anger and

abundant in loving-kindness. He spoke with great plainness of speech. So did St. Peter to whom there came a voice from heaven saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat," and who answered with conscientious promptness, "Not so, Lord!" These men spoke out in the divine presence as the little child speaks to his father. They meant no disrespect. They had not in their hearts the faintest shadow of presumption. God knew that, and was very patient with them.

Children are not naturally interested in ethics or in theology. The wise teacher takes that for granted. He knows that the child is living over again the long life of the race, and that in the infant school he is still in the stone age. The stone age was a time when the great man was not the philosopher, still less the saint, but the hero, the man of large and valiant deeds. Therefore the teacher comes into the infant school bringing the heroes with him, and he is

satisfied for a long time with admiration of the hero's sword and might. The hero's moral qualities will have to wait. The teacher will by no means fail to impress the moral lesson, but he will not be disappointed if it makes only a slight impression.

Especially, the teacher who has an understanding heart will be patient with the doubts of his older pupils. He will see that here again the ages of the past are lived over in the life of the individual. There is a time when doubt is normal. It is the mood out of which philosophy and discovery and progress have their beginnings. The teacher will be very tender of it. He will listen not only with patience but with humility, putting on no foolish air of omniscience nor alarm of orthodoxy, but reminding the questioner of the limitations of the widest knowledge, of the environment of mystery, and of the immeasurable vastness of truth. Leaving the question open, he will suggest this and that definite

assuring fact. Thus he will help his pupils out of the dark into the light.

Thus far I have considered the qualities of the teacher as they concern the relation between him and the children. Let us add now the element of the lesson. The next virtue is knowledge. The good teacher will come to the class with a clear knowledge of the lesson.

This is the result of study. First, of that wide study which takes all knowledge for its province. The teacher is best fitted intellectually for his task who is best able to look at the lesson against the wide background of history and of literature. He perceives what the lesson means in its connection with the general life. He is thus able to establish a point of contact between the Sunday-school and the high school. Here, for example, in the midst of the lesson, is a publican. For the class, the name signifies nothing, being unrelated with any previous experience. A publican is an ex-

tinct species. Even the fact that his business was to collect the customs and the taxes will not greatly interest the children, to whom these obligations have not actually come as yet. But wait. The publican was a servant of the Roman Empire. He was in employ of that great government whose fame is in the school books. Or the lesson mentions the Magnificat. Many a child has had his regard for the Magnificat much increased by learning that Longfellow brought it into a poem in the Tales of a Wayside Inn. This is a kind of knowledge with which the good teacher is continually storing and enriching his mind. Such a book as Prothero's "The Psalms in Human Life" provides a hundred points of connection between that part of the Bible and the history which is studied in the school. Such illustrations as those which are inexpensively published by the Perry Picture Company bring to the reinforcement of interest the genius of the greatest artists.

Then the teacher takes the assigned lesson and reads it slowly, looking at every word, going now to the dictionary and now to the geography, and making sure of a detailed understanding: What does it all mean? Who are these people? Whence have they come? Whither do they go? What is their possible place in our life? Questions of ethics, questions of theology, which may possibly arise in the minds of the children, or which ought to be proposed to them, will be first considered by the teacher. Lessons in Samuel or Kings will be compared with the parallel history in Chronicles; passages in one Gospel will be read in connection with the account of the same event in another; the Acts will be compared with the Epistles. George Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land" (A. C. Armstrong & Co.) will often be found suggestive. Charles Foster Kent's "Historical Bible" in six small volumes, four for the Old Testament and two for the New, will

bring the teacher the best treasures of recent scholarship.

Knowledge, however, may be dull enough unless it is vitalized by the next quality of which I will speak, the quality of imagination. The scenes, the people, the events, must be real, first to the teacher, then to the scholar.

The Bible is illuminated by imagination. The writers were intent on interesting us, and in their manner of doing it they are mighty bold. They do not hesitate, even in the absence of evidence, to make their heroes talk. One of the plainest differences between history of the usual kind and fiction is that history is printed in solid and formidable paragraphs, while fiction is full of conversation. He says, and she says, and so the story goes, to the delight of the reader. This is the method of the Bible. Balaam and Balak stand upon the peak of Peor, "that looketh down upon the desert." Along the desert is encamped the invading

army of Israel. Balak has sent for Balaam to curse these strong invaders, but after arranging all the right preliminaries, building seven altars and offering a bullock and a ram on every altar, still the words of malediction will not come. Again and again, the magician speaks the words of blessing. Then Balak loses his temper. He smites his hands together, as men do in anger. "I hired you to curse my enemies," he cries, "and you have blessed them altogether. Now, go home! go home! I meant to promote you to great honor, but the Lord has held you back from honor." And Balaam answers, "It is what I told you at the beginning. It is what I said plainly to your messengers. The prophet of the Lord God cannot be bribed. 'Balak,' I said, 'may give me his house full of silver and gold; that will make no difference. I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord to do either bad or good of my own mind.' Now listen!" And he predicts for Israel a larger blessing

still. How did the historian know what passed between the magician and the king? Did he read it in some dim inscription? Did he find it written on a brick? He knew no more about it than you or I. He had the fact of the conspiracy; he had the ancient poems which belonged to it; as for the conversation, he said to himself, How did they naturally speak that day when all the incantations resulted in our favor?

The Bible writers used their devout imagination: the teachers of the Bible may well do the same. That is what Mr. Moody did. It is one of the secrets of his unrivaled power over the attention and the conscience and the will of the people. In his preaching the patriarchs and the apostles were as real and alive as anybody in the congregation. He told what the neighbors said while the ark was a-preparing, how they called it "Noah's Folly," and asked him how he proposed to get it to the water. They reminded him that it was not

usual to build a boat in the middle of a sandy field. Of course, they did. We need no revelation, or even inspiration—only imagination—to tell us that. He described the home-coming of the man out of whom the Lord had cast a legion of devils. “There’s father!” cry the children, at first in terror, then in amazement. For father, instead of coming down the street, howling and jumping and waving his arms, is walking like a sober man. We look out of the window, and there he is; and we hear what he says to his wife and what his wife says to him. It is no doubt well to put some restraint on the pedagogic imagination, but imagination there must be. It is like painting a picture. The record provides a certain amount of material. Abraham talks with an angel at the tent door, and Sarah prepares a meal and spreads the table. The food is bread and butter, with a cup of milk, and a bit of meat,—veal, for which Abraham has killed a tender calf. We are not

told, however, how the tent looked, nor how Abraham and Sarah were attired, nor on what sort of table the meal was served, nor the appearance of the surrounding hills or trees. These the painter must supply. The teacher must do the same.

After knowledge and imagination, the next good quality is expression. That which is in the teacher's mind must be transferred to the mind of the listener.

Expression is assisted by clearness of thought. The wise teacher marshals the lesson like an invading army. Here are the main divisions, the right wing and the left; and in them their regiments; and in each regiment its companies; and in the rear the reserves, and the base of supplies. That is, the teacher makes a plan of the lesson. The good preacher does that in the preparation of his sermon. Phillips Brooks not only made a plan, but noted against each division how many pages it should have in the completed manuscript. The teacher, whose

time is brief, will find this an excellent example—else the bell will ring while the lesson is half taught. Such analysis will help the teacher to present truth in its right proportions, and to put the emphasis in the right places. And the scholar will remember.

Expression is assisted not only by clearness of thought but by simplicity of speech, even to the extent of homeliness. No matter in what version the lesson is read, it will still need further translation into the dialect of youth. The addition of the leaven to the meal is an act which, even to a class of useful girls, has no significance whatever. In all the instructions of their mother, and the recipes of the books, and the operations of the kitchen, they have never heard the word. They do, however, know something about yeast. A translation into our ordinary language illuminates the situation. The boys are altogether unacquainted with centurions. They have no idea whether a

centurion is a lawyer, or a doctor, or a minister: probably a minister. A new interest at once arises when they learn that "centurion" is the Latin word for "captain." So in almost every lesson.

The punctual, cheerful, sympathetic, patient teacher, possessed of the qualities of knowledge, of imagination and of expression, is likely to be a good teacher. But he can be sure that he is teaching aright only by use of a further quality which we may call the gift of interrogation. He will ask questions. Thus he will reveal both the apprehension and the misapprehension of his hearers and will perceive wherein his instruction needs to be explained, amplified and emphasized.

The wise teacher will continually interrupt his teaching with appeals to his pupils. He will punctuate all that he says with marks of interrogation. One effect of this method will be to gain and maintain attention. The lad with the wandering glance

will be recalled by the sound of his name and by the necessity to respond. And with this response comes a second effect in the impression which is thus made upon the memory. The fact of articulation clenches the statement. That which is only heard is for the most part remembered vaguely and is easily forgotten. It needs to be enforced by the repetition of the lips.

Attention, then, and remembrance are two of the fruits of good questioning. A third is information. Only by inquiry can the teacher be informed as to the contents of the scholar's mind. It is by interrogation that the process is completed whereby the words of Holy Scripture are adequately translated into the language of common life. In this process, the good teacher takes no knowledge for granted. It was a young person of more than ordinary intelligence who said, in answer to a question, that a censer is a man who takes a census. It was a student in a college for women who

said that Galilee was named for Galileo, who wrote a description of the country. It was in one of our most famous universities that among the freshmen who were suddenly called by a professor of English to write a story—any story—from the Old Testament, half-a-dozen wrote an account of the Prodigal Son.

Such statements open the gate of the Garden of Absurdity, in whose tangled ways and upon whose dizzy heights the scholars are pleasantly wandering while the teacher's earnest voice is busy with the lesson. There the sober words take on strange shapes, such as Ezekiel saw beside the river Chebar. The unquestioned scholar looks at the teacher with grave eyes, but in his mind he stands in the enchanted shadows where the Epistle to the Romans and Alice in Wonderland dance about him hand in hand. Nothing will recall him out of this condition except the sharp call of a question.

Thus I come to the ninth of the wise qual-

ties of the good teacher. The first four,—punctuality, cheerfulness, sympathy and patience,—may be roughly described as psychological. That is, they represent those elements in teaching which concern the spirit of the teacher and the scholar. The second four,—knowledge, imagination, expression and interrogation—we may perhaps call intellectual. They concern the mind of the teacher and the scholar. The quality to which I now come has to do with the heart. The supreme quality of the good teacher is religion.

What is all this for, this preparation of the lesson, this hour of instruction, this business of teaching in the Sunday-school? What is the aim and intention of this effort? It is not simply for the purpose of knowledge; it is for the purpose of character. The Sunday-school exists to assist boys and girls to grow up into good Christian men and women. The Bible is the text-book because of its effectiveness to do that thing.

That the child shall come into a knowledge of Jesus Christ, and thus into admiration and reverence and affection, and finally into entire allegiance is the true reason for which the Sunday-school is established.

And this purpose is effected mainly by the character of the teacher. The teacher may have all the qualities which I have named, and be a failure. He may be punctual and cheerful and all the rest of it, and yet be only qualified to teach arithmetic. For nobody can teach religion well unless he is himself religious. The teacher must prepare for his duties on Sunday by living in God's service all the week. He must sweeten and enrich and enforce his teaching by his own experience. He must be a person of prayer; he must have an abiding consciousness of the divine presence; he must be honestly trying in all he says and does and is, to please God; he must be seriously aware of the unspeakable importance of the soul; his affections must be set on

things above. He may well desire that his pupils shall love him, but he must desire, above and beyond all, that they shall love God.

Indeed, this final quality of religion may make amends for some weakness in the other virtues. This I say for the encouragement of those whom this catalogue of excellences may have disheartened. The teacher may not be very wise, but if he is good,—simply, unaffectedly and genuinely good,—he may be a good teacher. Even if he is only faithfully trying to be good, making many blunders and daily falling amidst petty temptations, yet keeping on,—even such an imperfect person may teach well. God grant it, for just such a person we must each confess ourself to be. Indeed, I will venture to assert that a modest sinner will be a better teacher than a perfect saint. The saint is somewhat remote from the homely conditions of our ordinary life. The sinner is of our own close kin and kind. He

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understands us. He knows by his own hard experience how difficult it is to be good. He has overcome some of his sins, by the grace of God, and when he tells us that we too may put down Satan under our feet, we believe him. We see that he knows what he is talking about.

Whoever, then, desires to be a better Christian, and is earnestly endeavoring day by day to bring that good desire to good effect, may teach in Sunday-school, the whole occupation of which is to bring the learners into that frame of mind. No others need apply.

CHAPTER XIII

SUNDAY AND THE CHILDREN

HE Sunday-school solves a part of the Sunday problem, but only a small part. For an hour or more, the children are trained, more or less effectively, in religion; but many hours remain. Here is a day set apart by common custom from the other days, and in its intention devoted to the furtherance of religion. How may it be best employed to serve the purposes which we have at heart?

In order to make our Sunday plans aright, we ought to have a clear understanding as to the significance of the day. Thus we shall be able to instruct our conscience, which is at present somewhat confused; and we shall be guided in our endeavor to adjust the traditions brought down from our

devout ancestors to the usages which seem to be forced upon us by our contemporary conditions.

The day has two essential meanings. One is contained in the word Rest, the other in the word Religion.

The Old Testament day is enjoined in the fourth commandment. The sanction of it, the reason for setting it apart, is stated in one way in Exodus and in another way in Deuteronomy. In the more familiar form, in Exodus (20: 11) the holy day appears as a commemoration of the repose of the Creator after the making of the world. He "rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it." In the other form, in Deuteronomy (5: 15) the day is a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt. "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord thy God

commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” There is no difference, however, as to the spirit and the manner in which the day is to be observed. It is to be kept in the spirit of religion; it is a sabbath unto the Lord God, in His name and honor. Special sacrifices were appointed to be offered at that time. And it is to be kept in the manner of a holiday. The emphatic and distinctive word is “rest.” “Thou shalt not do any work.” And this blessing of rest is extended not only to all the members of the household, but to all strangers who for the moment may be sojourning in the household, and to the domestic animals.

Accordingly, the essential purpose of the sabbath was considerate and philanthropic. It was a law of kindness. It was one of the earliest endeavors to determine by statute the relation of the employer to the employed. The sanction in Deuteronomy is significant and explanatory. “You have been slaves,” the commandment says, “and

you are now in your new freedom to have slaves yourselves. Remember your own bondage. Do not be hard upon your servants. Once every week give them a day off."

The method by which the Old Testament legislators tried to secure this leisure was that of negation and restriction. Such and such things, interfering with the right to rest, might not be done. The method was enforced with some severity. The incident of the man who was found gathering sticks on the sabbath day and was promptly stoned to death for the admonition of the people, shows how zealously they guarded against even those little and innocent transgressions which might grow into serious infringements of the privilege of leisure. They were mindful of the fable of the camel who, being permitted to put one toe into the tent, gradually got his whole body in after it, and ejected the owner. They made many curious laws concerning the keeping of the

holy day, prescribing to the last minute detail what might not be done.

Two considerations, however, defend us from drawing over-severe conclusions from the Old Testament observance.

One is the fact that the Old Testament people enjoyed the Sabbath. They delighted in it. There is no more expression of a sense of hardship in the keeping of the Jewish sabbath than there is among us as to the keeping of Thanksgiving Day or Christmas. The many rules and the accompanying penalties did not make the sabbath an irksome or gloomy day. It was a festival of social joy. Work was indeed forbidden, but no ban was put on play. Meals might not be prepared on that day, but the choicest meals of the week were prepared on the day preceding and served on the sabbath. In the Gospels, the Lord is often seen going out to dinner on that day. When Hosea brought a message from God beginning, "I will cause all her mirth to cease," the mirth

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included among other festivals the sabbath. It was a time for domestic happiness, for the reunion of families, for the ceasing of the daily round of labor in order that all tired people might have rest and recreation. It was a national holiday.

The other fact to be had in mind regarding the restrictions set about the sabbath is that Jesus dealt with them with the utmost freedom. This He did to an extent which continually scandalized His strict neighbors. He did not hesitate on that day to do the works of mercy. When the apostles on the sabbath were permitted to pluck ears of wheat as they walked, and eat them, they violated the express letter of the contemporary law. The plucking was a kind of reaping, and the taking of the kernel from the husk was a kind of threshing. To such laws and interpretations, Jesus paid no attention. He found that the observance of the sabbath had become a superstition. Religious people, instead of concerning

themselves with securing the rest and recreation which belonged to the original intention of the day, were exalting the day itself into a place of artificial sanctity, and were entirely intent on the obedience of the regulations which they had invented. He returned, both by precept and by example, to the simplicity and philanthropy of the fourth commandment. Two of His sayings contain the principles of His observance of the sabbath. He said, "It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day" (Matth. 12:12). And He said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Thus He proclaimed anew the sabbath as a friendly day. The heart of it is kindness and brotherliness, a considerate and helpful spirit, an extension of happiness, a contribution to the pleasantness of life, a ministry to the physical and social welfare of man. Man is not to be forced into hard and formal observances as if there were a virtue in a prescribed keeping of a

holy day; the day is to be freely adapted to the needs of man, and made to serve the purposes of rest and recreation.

When, therefore, the question of Sunday play is intelligently referred to the fourth commandment for decision, both the letter of the commandment and the Christian interpretation of it declare for the affirmative. So far as the Bible is concerned, there is no objection whatever to any form of recreation which does not interfere with rest. The Book of Sports, whose Sunday pastimes offended the Puritans, was not inconsistent with the laws of Moses. On the contrary, it was in accord with the true purpose of the fourth commandment, which is to increase the happiness of society, to protect men from the oppression of wealth and power, to bring the privilege of leisure into the lives even of the poorest, and to keep religion in close connection with human welfare. The commandment might be cited against great base-ball games and the-

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aters and excursions on Sunday, on the ground that they compel the labor of large numbers of attendants, players, conductors and motormen. Though, even in these cases, it might be argued that the labor which is necessary to provide good pleasure for the people is not against the intention of the law. If the theaters, for example, were honestly a benefit to the people, offering an amusement which on the whole is innocent and helpful, they would belong with the libraries, the picture galleries and the concerts of good music, as excellent features of a Christian Sunday. Under the most cautious construction the commandment can hardly be read as prohibiting the games of children. So far as the commandment goes, Sunday is a play day. The only thing which is distinctly forbidden is whatever turns it into a work day.

Children play by nature. They are made that way. Thus it is that they grow, and express themselves. If they may not play

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on Sunday, the holy day is changed from a festival to a fast. Its true purpose is contradicted. Quite apart from the commandment, it would seem unwise to do anything to make the children hate religion. That would hardly be for the glory of God. It would be a misfortune to have the children associate religion with gloom, and awful silence, and constrained sobriety, and dullness. The experiment has been fairly tried, and it has resulted as anybody really acquainted with children must have foreseen. We are suffering to-day from the after effects of it. The day of religion was made a sort of Day of Judgment. The mirth, which Hosea associated with it, was accounted sin. Nobody might laugh aloud without rebuke. There was no intention in the minds of the religious to make the children deliberately unhappy. What was done was to leave the children out of the account. The day was ordered according to the spiritual aspirations of mature per-

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sons, to whom it was actually a joy. They loved to go to church, and read their Bibles, and be quiet. To this situation the children were made to conform themselves. They were directed to behave as if they were fifty years of age. Of course, they hated it; and of course some of them hated the religion to which the day was devoted. That was the inevitable result of so serious a misunderstanding of childhood.

Sunday afternoon may profitably be devoted to the children. It is a time for busy parents to get better acquainted with their sons and daughters. It is an opportunity for reading aloud; in part in the Bible, or in some book about the Bible, for direct training in religion, but also in some book whose spiritual influence may be less direct, but whose natural interest shall communicate a real pleasure to the day. Such a book, or series of books, kept for Sunday afternoons, will cause those hours to be looked forward to. The same is true of

Sunday games, not necessarily connected in any way with religion, but chosen out of other games because the children like them best, and reserved for Sunday in order to help make that the best day of the week. Sunday afternoon is a time for family walking, for household excursions into the green country. Thoreau said that he belonged to the Church of the Sunday Walkers. It is a fine parish,—provided its services are held on Sunday afternoons. If in the intervals of such occupation, the boys want to play ball and the girls to play house, why not? Let the best toys be kept for the hallowing of the holy day. Let the sabbath be called, in the words of Isaiah, “a delight.” Let every member of the family enjoy it according to his own idea of joy.

The questions of the automobile, of the golf course and of the afternoon tea on Sunday do not come within the province of my present purpose, but they bring to our attention the fact that, of the meanings of the

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day, rest is only one. The other is religion.

With the rise of the Christian religion, leaving the Jewish Church and its ordinances behind it, a change took place both in the day itself and in its observance. The day was changed from the end of the week to the beginning; and while the idea of rest was brought over out of the old order, the idea of religion was now given an increased importance. The name, the Lord's day, implies a special devotion of the time to Him. There are glimpses of Christians assembled on that day for divine service, especially for the Holy Communion. The Christian day is not for physical refreshment only, and not at all for mere indolence or for selfish relaxation, but for the development of the spiritual life, for the good of the soul.

This introduces another standard of judgment as to what may and may not be done on Sunday. Everything is appropriate to

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the Christian festival which is truly in the direction of religious or better living. Everything is out of keeping with it which belongs only to the material side of life, or which leaves people worse instead of better. It is a day for attendance at the churches, in order to make use individually of the means of grace, and in order to make a contribution socially to the strength and impetus of the great forces which are directed to the bringing in of the kingdom of God. Religion is thus made of such importance in the life of the people as to warrant the setting apart of one day in every week for the sake of it. One day in every seven, men and women shall be set free from their customary duties, and children shall be dismissed from school, that they may have opportunity to make use of the privileges of the church. No other institution is given such a right of way.

Accordingly, on Sunday morning the children are to be taken to church. It is

true that there is the peril of having the children disturb the service, and annoy the congregation; and there is also the peril of making the children hate the service. But if, in avoiding these dangers, the children are left at home, or are encouraged to consider the Sunday-school a substitute for the church, there is a possibility that they may never begin to go. Perhaps the best thing to do, in the midst of these perplexities, is to keep church-going as a special privilege and reward for good behavior until the age of reasonably steady habits. Then insist on attendance at church like attendance at school, as a normal part of decent living and subject to precisely the same excuses. Commonly, children who are old enough to go to school are old enough to go to church. The two introductions to a wider experience may properly be made at the same period. Then nothing should be allowed to keep the child from church which would not validly keep him from school. Thus the habit is

formed, and a solid contribution is made to the child's religious education.

It may indeed be urged against the attendance of children that the morning service in some churches has no more regard for their needs or interests than the discipline of the Puritan sabbath. But there is a general improvement in this respect. It is true that a Sunday service which consists of ten minutes of "preliminary exercises," and fifty minutes of sermon is not adapted to children. Under such conditions, the sermon, with all its length, rarely contains anything which is profitable for them. Its very language is unknown to them. They might as well be made to attend a weekly lecture on Plato or Aristotle. To compel them to keep still, not to whisper, not to read, not to sleep during such a disquisition, is a species of torture. And to punish them because they do not behave properly is an exercise of tyrannical injustice. Happily, in most churches an enrichment of the litur-

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gical features of the service is not only shortening the sermon but providing responses and singing in which the children may join. Such a service is varied, with down-sitting and up-rising, and is constructed according to some understanding of human nature, the human nature not only of youth but of maturity. Even the children are not wearied.

If a choice must be made between the church and the Sunday-school, on the ground that the two together are too long and wearisome, a wise preference will probably select the church. In that case, special attention will need to be made to the instruction of the children at home. One of the unedifying sights of our Christian Sunday is the spectacle of troops of children, dismissed from the church school, passing the church door to spend the rest of the day idly. It is a prophecy of a coming generation of non-churchgoers. The habit of church attendance, which counts for so

much in the orderly religious life, is thus omitted. The boys and girls do not begin to go to church. Then when they get through the Sunday-school, in the midst of their teens, they are likely to turn their backs upon the whole system of organized religion. To this result, such training leads.

Properly, the Sunday-school should be a preparation for the church. The children should there be instructed to take part intelligently in the church services. They should learn there the words and music of the hymns which the congregation sing. There is opportunity, indeed, among the younger children for the singing of hymns which are juvenile in their expression and which set forth the appropriate emotions of early childhood. But the older children are to learn the classic poetry of the hymnal just as they learn in the day school the classic poetry of the great masters. Some of it will far exceed their present experience, but no

more so than the lines of Milton and Shakespeare, no more so than the Psalms. They will get enough for present use, and will store up treasures for the time to come. And in the church, they will be able to take part with their elders.

The Sunday-school, however, is no fair substitute for the church. It gives but little time to the great religious exercise of worship, and it makes no place for the sacramental side of the spiritual life. It does not bring the child into accord with the ancient, venerable and universal expression of corporate devotion. It does not initiate him into that society in which he should have his membership all the rest of his life. It does not put him where he ought to be, and start him right.

We probably underestimate both the endurance and the interest of children. No doubt, our forefathers demanded somewhat too much, with their protracted prayers and sermons and their two Sunday-schools, one

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in the morning and the other in the afternoon. We are in danger of going to the extreme of over-anxiety as to the children's comfort. They seem to get along pretty well with a good measure of time on week days at their schools. What is asked on Sunday is after all not excessive. The Sunday-school lasts an hour, and the morning service rarely exceeds an hour and a half and is often shorter than that. It is true that at times most normal children rebel against both of these forms of confinement in-doors. The best plan is to deal with their feeling about the church as we deal with their feeling about the school. We make them go to school, whether they like it or not. Sometimes they hate the school, but they almost always come presently into the right mind about it, and are grateful for the discipline. They may, on unusually pleasant Sundays, hate the church. No matter. If they are easily permitted to stay at home, they will despise it; and that is

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worse. A little wholesome temporary rebellion is better than contempt.

As the holy day draws to a close, the Christian family may sing together the great hymns. Father and mother and children may unite in this expression of penitence or prayer or praise. Most persons who are in good health and spirits like to sing. Much is lost out of life, both domestic and religious, when the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches or any other hindering distraction is permitted to interfere with this hallowing of the day. Thus the sun sets upon a festival in which both rest and religion have contributed to the joy of life, to the upbuilding of character, and to the glory of God. Such a day kept holy sweetens the domestic temper, elevates the domestic ideals, brings parents and children closer together, and is a blessing to the family.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN

HE relation between church attendance and church membership may be roughly compared to the difference between reading the papers and going to the polls. The political news contained in the papers is like the religious instruction contained in the sermons. But the purpose of both the editor and the preacher is to get people to perform the duties of membership. Even the virtue of individual good behavior, excellent as it is in both cases, is not enough. What is needed is an active combination of well-behaved persons for the accomplishment of the common welfare. The newspaper reader ought to take an effective part in the politics of his community by belonging to the political organi-

zation, and the church attendant ought to take a like effective share in the religion of his community by belonging to the religious organization. It is a matter of some importance whether a citizen be a Republican or a Democrat, and it is a matter of some importance whether a Christian be a Presbyterian or a Methodist. But these are matters of subordinate detail. The essential thing is membership somewhere. Something is the matter with the man who is not registered on the list of voters in his town, and something is the matter with the man whose name does not appear in the list of members of some church. Our boys are to be trained to enter fully into all the privileges and responsibilities of the corporate life.

The church, in all its many—too many—varieties, is the community organized for purposes of religious activity. It thus offers to the individual the opportunity of identification and of combination.

By membership in the church, the individual identifies himself with a certain company of people, and with the causes in which they are engaged and the spirit by which they are animated. Thus he is mightily assisted by one of the most potent of all influences, the influence of expectation. One of the chief causes of difference between people is the different expectations which surround them. In some localities people are expected to be clean, well-mannered, polite, considerate and sober. In such places it is rather more easy to live in accordance with this public opinion than not. Not to be clean, not to be sober, involves a revolt against the common conditions, and demands a distinct decision to be different from one's neighbors. They who live surrounded by such an expectation are thereby strengthened against the assaults of the devil. They are protected from many temptations. On the other hand, there are localities where the common expectation is

quite different. The general sentiment runs so strongly against good grammar, to take a minor detail, that nobody can speak grammatically in that neighborhood without appearing eccentric or affected. And the same sentiment influences not only the manner but the matter of one's speech. It extends also to behavior. In China, for example, nobody is tempted to get drunk in the daytime, for the whole public opinion of the nation is against it. In order to get drunk in the daytime, a man must deliberately violate the settled proprieties, and expose himself to the derision and dislike of all his acquaintance. It makes China a sober nation, in the daytime.

These illustrations confirm the obvious fact that character is tremendously determined by our choice of a locality in which to live,—if we are able to make such a choice,—by our selection of associates, and in general by our environment of expectation. We desire that our children shall

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have such companions as shall reinforce all the good counsel which we have given them at home. We would have them live under such conditions that goodness shall be a matter of common acceptation, a habit, a thing understood and taken for granted. Reform, when such a radical change becomes necessary, is greatly assisted by an accompanying change of associations. Young people who are going the wrong way are saved by sharply severing themselves from their misleading friends and openly entering into new and altogether different relations. And there is no need of such a difficult discipline if the right relations are entered into early, and thereafter continually maintained.

The church represents this helpful association. To belong to it is to surround oneself with the environment of right expectation. It is to make it easier to be good than to be bad. It is a deliberate choice of helpful companions. It is a reinforcement

of the will. We who know by a somewhat long experience how hard it is to do right and be right, wish in consequence to give our children all possible assistance. And for the furtherance of this purpose, here is the church, an organized environment of good expectation, a definite exercise of the influence of public opinion. If our children belong to it, they are not only brought into the circle of those whose standards are high, but they are defended against many temptations. When the temptation comes, they say, "If I do this, I lose at once not only my own self-respect, but the respect and regard of most of the people whom I know. For the pleasure which you offer, I must pay a price which involves most of the substantial pleasures of my life. I must amaze my friends. I must make myself an eccentric exception among my associates. I must flatly contradict that for which I claim to stand." That is what we desire to have our children say in their souls, when they

must make their decisions for or against the right. And if we bring them into the membership of the church, we make that argument natural and convincing.

And the church represents not only identification but combination. After all, the main purpose of a good life is not to preserve one's goodness but to make it useful and effective. That is the best way to preserve it. The defensive side plays the losing game. "Which will win?" says one bystander to another, as the football game begins. "Which will win, the crimson or the blue?" "The blue," answers the other instantly, "for, don't you see, the crimson side is playing to keep the blue from scoring, while the blue is playing to score?" The advantage in football, in politics, in reform, in war, is always with the attack. The positive side, the aggressive side, they who are intent on getting something done, win. Their strength is magnified by their position.

Our prayers for the good character of our children will be answered like the desire of the farmer for the harvest. The farmer puts the seed into such conditions as shall minister to its growth. That is all that he can do. So far as he is able he determines the conditions; then the seed grows. Children grow in religion not by emphasis on habits of introspection, and not by being hedged about with protection or limitation, but by being brought into definite religious activity. They need aggressive goodness. Thus contagious diseases are much more readily caught by anxious persons, who are merely passive and afraid, than by doctors and nurses who are engaged in contending with the contagion. There is a certain measure of psychological immunity. And it holds true in the contagion of evil. The strongest assurance we can have of the substantial goodness of our children is attained when we find them trying not merely to be good but to do good. The

interior fight against sin will go on well when it is but a skirmish in a great war against the devil in the world.

For service in this war, the church offers immediate occupation. The true church is a combination of individuals for better social progress. If that is not true of the local parish, then the parish needs active reformation. It needs to be set to work. But commonly to-day it is working hard already. It is undertaking the improvement of the community. This is a matter which can be effected only by organization. The fact that there are neighborhoods in which the atmosphere of expectation is such that it is much more easy there to be bad than good, is evidence that the difficulty lies not in weakness of individual endeavor but in the strength of social forces and conditions. To change these forces and conditions is beyond the power of any number of isolated individuals. The situation calls for collective action. The influences of

evil are organized, and the influences of good must be organized to meet them.

By membership in the church, children are put in the way of these good works. They are given something definite to do. Belonging to the church, they belong naturally to societies within the church for missionary purposes, for philanthropic endeavor, for the sharing of their privileges with others less privileged. The parish house, in many places, is a center of such beneficent activity. Children who are not ready by reason of youth to engage in the work of definite organizations for moral or political reform, are here given tasks level with their ability and congenial with their interests. They begin to work with others for the common good. They learn how. They get the habit. And they make their contribution to that general advance of the kingdom of heaven which is helped by every little effort when it is added to a hundred other little efforts.

The normal rite of initiation into the membership of the Christian Church is the sacrament of baptism. This was originally intended for adult persons. It was accordingly preceded by a declaration of repentance and of faith. Standing in the water, the new disciple turned to the west and renounced the devil, he then turned to the east and recited the Creed. That is, he proclaimed openly his determination to forsake the sins and offenses of his previous life, and declared his allegiance to those truths concerning God and the world whereby he purposed to live anew and better. All the clear indications of the New Testament reveal the sacrament of baptism as an initiation not of children but of their parents into the church.

The extension of this privilege to children was in defiance of both tradition and authority. When the consistent reasoners of the Reformation took it away from children on the ground that it was neither com-

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manded nor commended in the Bible they were quite right. They were in error, however, in thinking that it had been instituted by the priests. They were in pursuit of everything priestly, and when they found it they did their best to destroy it. But the custom of making children members of the church arose in defiance of the priests. It was demanded by the laity. The priests urged in vain that baptism was only for persons who could make ready for it by faith and repentance. The people refused to have an adult church. They insisted that the Christian society should be as inclusive as human nature itself, and should set no barriers against race or social condition or sex or age. When they came in, they would bring their children with them. In the midst of the hostile world in which they lived, the church, they felt, was like a fortress in a beleaguered land. To this fortress they came for safety, but they would not leave their little ones outside the gate.

When the officers of the garrison said, "It is not safe to take these children in; who can tell but that they may presently be found on the side of the devil against whom we are fighting?" there were good people in the fort who said, "We will look out for that; we will be their sponsors."

The baptism of infants, then, became the common custom of the church quite apart from any interpretation of the New Testament, and against the will of strict ecclesiastical authority, at the demand of affection, because the fathers and mothers wanted it. Resting on this substantial foundation in human nature, it has successfully resisted all the unanswerable arguments which are based on the reading of texts of Scripture. Those arguments appeal, indeed, to logical minds, and adult churches are founded in consequence of them, but for the most part the logic of human affection sets at naught the reasoning of the commentators.

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The change from adult to infant membership in the church divided the original service of baptism into two parts. The baptism was made a service by itself, and the confession of faith and repentance was postponed to make a later service by itself. This later service, which is universal in the churches where infants are baptized, is called by many names, among which a common and convenient title is confirmation. The time of life contemplated in this book extends from one to the other of the rites whereby the fact of church membership is begun and completed: from baptism in infancy to confirmation about the age of fifteen years.

The value of the baptism of children as a part of their training in religion may be expressed in terms of life or in terms of loyalty. When it is expressed in terms of life, the natural figure is that of the grafting of a branch into a tree: the life of the tree gives life to the branch; out of the tree

into the branch flows vitality and strength. Thus baptism is a realization of our Lord's words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Whether by act, the child being by baptism made a member of Christ, as the grafted twig is made a part of the stem; or by assertion, the eternal relation of the child to Christ being recognized and affirmed in baptism; the essential thing is the divine association accomplished or asserted. The child who by natural birth is made partaker of the physical life, by spiritual birth is made partaker of the divine life. He is a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. This privilege involves, of course, no interior change. Nothing happens in the heart of the child when the water of baptism is poured upon his head. The change which is involved or declared is one of environment. Out of the influences of the secular world, the child is brought into the influences of the church. All the defini-

tions of the rite are but synonymns of the statement that by baptism he is made a member of the church. That is precisely what takes place. That is what baptism is: it is the rite of initiation into the church. But this involves so much, brings to bear upon the child influences so potent and opens into so new a life, that the poetic and symbolic word "regeneration" is a fair expression of it. Like adoption into a family, it is a new birth.

The moral values of the baptism of children may also be stated in terms of loyalty. They may be reminded on occasion that they belong to the most ancient and important of societies, and they must keep themselves worthy of the privilege of membership. They must heed the old appeal of *noblesse obligé*. All the true pride of family, of country, of fellowship must be brought into application to the duties which are demanded by the holy church. There are ancient stories of martyrdom which

show what not only men and women but even children were glad and eager to endure for the sake of Christ. The boys and girls of Lyons in the days of Pothinus and Ponticus, the boys and girls of Carthage in the days of Perpetua, are inspiring examples. Walter Pater, near the end of "Marius the Epicurean," tells the first story as it was told in the wonderful letter which the faithful at Lyons sent to their brethren of other cities. The second story, also by contemporary hands, is at the end of the third volume of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, as published by Scribners. These narratives of courage and faith and endurance illustrate the words of the baptismal service where the forehead is signed with the sign of the cross, "in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

All the loyalty of knights and soldiers is to be brought into Christ's service. King Arthur and his Table Round, the valor of Tristram, the courtesy of Launcelot, the purity of Galahad, as they are set forth by Howard Pyle in his splendid series of retellings of the old romances,—these are heroes of a company into which the baptized child is admitted by his baptism. He is a page in this chivalric order, and by and by, in confirmation, he is to become a knight. The moral implications of knighthood are to be pointed out; the exaltation of kindness and fairness and consideration over all the might of physical prowess, and the necessity of a pure heart in order to achieve the great quest of the Grail, are to be emphasized. The invincible admiration of the child for the soldier is to be used. All the glory of the soldier's bravery, all the ignominy of the soldier's cowardice or treachery, are now possible to the child who by baptism is a soldier of the cross. Every

day he fights or runs away; every day he encounters an assault of the devil and wins or loses. Whenever temptation comes to tell a lie, to speak an unclean word, to strike an unfair blow, the fight is on, and the result shows what sort of a soldier he is. He is fortified and reinforced and armed by these suggestions which depend upon the fact of baptism. The appeal is to his loyalty, to his courage, to his finest qualities; and he is sensitive to it. He will do as a knight or a soldier that to which no moral proposition or lesson in ethics will ever bring him. The personal element in the Christian religion,—the joy of following a splendid leader, the instinct of stout contention for such a leader's sake against an enemy,—this is made definitely available by the fact of initiation by baptism into the society of Christ.

The age at which the Christian apprenticeship comes to an end and the Christian mastery begins, differs in different children.

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Under the conditions of a sheltered and dependent life, children mature later, and are still boys and girls at an age when their grandparents were men and women. There is therefore a tendency to postpone that public undertaking of the responsibilities of church membership which is the next step after baptism, or in the adult churches is baptism itself. A fair average, however, sets the age of fifteen years as a fitting time for such a step. Confirmation much before or much after such a date is exceptional. The idea is that the child should be old enough to understand in good measure what his promises mean, and should be young enough to make the promises in time to meet the increasing temptations of youth.

It is important to present this matter to the child as a perfectly natural part of the progress of his life. The college student passes out of college into the independent work which is before him, and the fact is marked by the festival of Commencement:

Confirmation corresponds in the life of religion to such an ending and beginning. Thus the page enters by a definite ceremony into the privilege of knighthood. Thus the youth, coming of age, is formally admitted to the right to vote. All these are examples of natural progress. The student, the page, the youth, look forward eagerly to the time when they may attain that for which they have been making ready. The completion of the act of joining the church is a similar fulfillment, and should be held before children as both natural and desirable. It should seem to them the normal thing to do.

Conversion means turning about, and is absolutely necessary in the case of those who are turned in the wrong direction. The connection of repentance with the undertaking of church membership indicates a need of some measure of conversion in all people. There should be a clear recognition of the fact of sin, and a definite reso-

lution to put away the wrong and do the right. This, however, is somewhat different from the doctrine of conversion which represented it as a tremendous spiritual experience. Something must happen to the child, so it was believed, akin to the dramatic adventure of Saul on the way to Damascus. There must be a horror of great darkness, out of which gradually, with pain and crying, one came at last out of the valley of the shadow of death into the light and joy and life of Christian faith. This teaching made a temperamental experience a universal fact. It was a reality with many of those who taught it, and they inferred, naturally enough, that all people were like them, and must enter into the kingdom of heaven in their way. The truth is that this entrance is over the wall instead of through the gate. It is the hard climb of those who are out of the way and to whom the open gate is unaccessible, or who are by nature fond of climbing and

prefer the wall to the gate because of its difficulty. The entrance into the kingdom of heaven is as natural as walking. For children who have been nurtured in a Christian home, and who have grown up in the admonition of the Lord, no spiritual catastrophe is needed. They who have never turned away do not need to turn about. All they have to do is to go on.

Confirmation is a time for instruction and for resolution. These are the positive forms of the faith and repentance which are connected in the Bible with the undertaking of church membership.

The child is passing now out of childhood into youth. It is an opportunity, at church and at home, for a review of the religious training of the previous years. The time is convenient for examination, and for such correction and addition as examination indicates. As the young citizen ought to be instructed in the significance of the state and his new relation to

it, so ought the young Christian to be instructed in the significance of the church and the new life which he is now to live. Such teaching may begin with the rites of baptism and of confirmation, including their history, their meaning and their application. Then may follow lessons in character, following the suggestions of the Commandments and the Beatitudes; in the Creed, article by article, expounding the Christian faith; in the Bible, in the Church; finally in prayer, private and public, ending with the sacrament to which confirmation gives admission, the Lord's Supper.

Also, the time is to be improved for resolution. The value of this public announcement of one's religious position is evidenced not only by Scripture but by psychology. It is that "decided initiative" which, we are told, is essential to the permanence of our decisions. It lays hold upon that public opinion which, as we saw, is a determining

influence in the formation of character. It is a mighty help to our children when they come to stand up in the presence of their neighbors and companions and thus openly assume the vows of discipleship. It clenches their resolution. It does not, indeed, commit them to perfection. They could not undertake it on that understanding. But it does commit them to endeavor. They say publicly by this act, "I am resolved, God helping me, to live a Christian life, to speak as a Christian, to behave as a Christian, to think as a Christian. Here is where I stand. This is what I mean to do." They are helped thereby to do it. Presently, when they are tempted to do evil, the answer is, "You must think I am a fool. I was confirmed last week." The indifferent, the wavering, the half-hearted, are like a garrison divided against itself: they are exposed to the worst perils of attack and defeat. They invite it. The youth who says, not in shame but with pride of posi-

tion, "I am a Christian, I am a churchman," has the respect of his neighbors; like the man who speaks up in a good, round, self-respecting voice, and says, "I am an Imperialist"; or, "I am a free-trader"; or, "Thank you, I don't drink." Confirmation is such an out-spoken announcement, and it helps a youth to say the same sort of thing again in private.

The distinctive privilege of church membership is the right to partake of the Holy Communion. Here, as with confirmation, emphasis is to be put upon the place of the sacrament in the order of nature. The festival of the bread and wine is far older than the Christian institution of it on the eve of the crucifixion. Something very like it was observed in every Jewish family on the eve of every sabbath. It was one of the pleasant and significant customs of the common life. It was an act of thanksgiving for the providence of God in the fruits of the earth and in all the blessings of our

lives. When it became a Christian sacrament, a whole new range of associations was added, but all the old significance remained. The appearance of it in the religion of Mithra, the most widespread and formidable of all the competitors of Christianity in the Roman Empire, indicates not that it was imitated from the Christian service but that it had its source in the same universal instinct. From the beginning of the world the act of eating together has been a natural symbol of communion both with our neighbors who are beside us and with God Who is above and about us.

Into this most ancient and venerable of rites, the new disciple is admitted. He ought to be so instructed that he shall come gladly, and without fear. All that is said about it in the Bible declares it as a feast of hospitality and simplicity, except in one place. St. Paul connected “unworthy” coming to the Supper with “damnation.”

And this one note of terror has overborne the other voices of free invitation. But the two words need to be defined. Damnation has no particular connection with eternal punishment. It is not intended to single out unworthy coming to Communion as the worst of transgressions. The Revised Version sets this straight. The word is there translated “condemnation.” That is what it means. The Lord condemns the sin of coming unworthily as He condemns the sin of lying or of coveting. The effect of the sentence is simply to bring it into the list of the sins: not to pronounce it the worst of the sins. And the word “unworthy,” as the whole context shows, refers not to a sense of our unworthiness as sinners: we are all, in that sense, unworthy, even to gather up the crumbs under the Lord’s table. The reference is to indifference, to carelessness, to irreligion, to an approach to the sacrament without earnestness or devotion. There is nothing in either word to frighten

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anybody who comes desiring to be better, to overcome his sins, to get the great help of God.

The sacrament is for spiritual strength. It is of this that the bread and wine are symbols. Here our souls are refreshed. Here we come, into this presence of God, for comfort, for guidance, for protection, for new courage, for new aspiration. Here we consecrate ourselves anew to the service of Christ. With this sacrament, the child passes out of childhood into new independence, new privilege and opportunity, new responsibility and new life in the Church of God.

CHAPTER XV

THE GOOD CHILD

HE value of religion is tested by its results in character. When a father says, "One of my sons goes to church only once a week, but I can trust him; another goes to church every day, but he is the most selfish member of my family," it is plain that something is the matter with the religious son's religion. He seems to go to church for some other purpose than to increase in the favor of God.

The true symbol of the relation between religion and character is in the description of the Hebrew temple, where the worshiper proceeded from court to court, from altar to altar, along a series of ascending sanctities, until he reached at last the Holy of Holies, within which beneath the wings

of the golden seraphim, was the Ark of the Covenant which contained the Ten Commandments. All the worship culminated in the consciousness of the will of God. The supreme thing was the moral law.

One of the results of a right training of children in religion is obedience. It is enshrined in the Commandments themselves, and is at the heart of all good conduct. It is often made difficult for children by the complications which are produced by parental uncertainty. It is sometimes forgotten that obedience is a virtue for which the coöperation of two persons is essential, one to give the orders, the other to carry them out. The initial condition is a judicious, firm and well-considered giving of orders. Nothing is so demoralizing to a gang of workmen or to a band of soldiers as a series of hasty, unadvised and contradictory commands. With all the willingness in the world, the sense of distrust which is thus awakened suggests dis-

obedience. A master of the art of presiding over public assemblies said that a decision once made by such an officer must be adhered to by him, even though he suspects that he might have been wiser if he had decided differently. The proper redress is for the assembly to reverse his ruling, not for him to change it with his change of mind. For an uncertainty as to the will of a moderator calls forth all the disorder which he is set to moderate.

The trouble with many children who seem not to know how to obey is that their parents do not know how to command. The orders are given hastily, and changed readily on petition. Even an unwillingness to obey is made a sufficient reason for withdrawing the injunction. Much of the discipline of young children is as foolish as the mother who says in answer to the question, Why? "Because! And you know, Johnny, that when mother says 'Because,' she means 'Because!'" The child quickly

perceives that the parental discipline has no more sense in it than that. The disobedience which naturally ensues is a fair expression of distrust. Obedience begins with respect. But respect is forfeited when it is made plain that the commands are not intelligently given.

Obedience is the initial virtue. It is a difficult ideal, like all the good ideals, and it calls for much effort from both the parents and the child. It is important like a great stone in the foundation : if such a stone gives way, the wall above begins to crack. All civic betterment, all progress of nations and of churches, all righteousness, depends upon it. All the safeguards and sanctions of religion are to be brought about it. It is to be pointed out in the lives of saints and heroes, and enforced by precept upon precept, and made a matter of prayer. It begins with the just and certain laws of the home and proceeds to the divine laws of heaven and earth. It teaches the lesson

which all the Scriptures teach by admonition, and which life teaches by experience, sometimes too late, that goodness and happiness are bound up together. Not necessarily goodness and material happiness, but goodness and the true and substantial satisfaction of life. It illustrates the rewards and penalties of God.

Children are to be instructed that they are to obey their parents not only because that is the desire of their parents but because it is the will of God. And they are to be shown how peace and order and efficiency and happiness depend upon it under all conditions, in families, in armies, and in nations. It is one of the universal principles upon which the whole universe of God is ordered. By the help of religion, by the aid of the Bible and of the church, as the consequence of our prayers, we are to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven, beginning in the nursery.

Another of the results of a right training

in religion is the grace of courtesy. Obedience is needed to make life possible, courtesy is needed to make life pleasant. It takes the common actions, and somehow adds to them what music adds to words, and fragrance adds to flowers. When Thoreau said that the finest of acts is to improve the quality of the day, he was thinking of some such subtle thing as the grace of courtesy, whereby the humblest and homeliest actions are dignified and ennobled, like the pots and pans of the ideal Jerusalem, with "Holiness unto the Lord" engraved upon them.

For example, to show mercy, in the sense of being considerate of our neighbors, may be a dull or even offensive virtue unless we follow St. Paul's admonition, and do it "with cheerfulness." And that phrase may perhaps be taken as the true formula of all courtesy. Courtesy is the grace which adds to obedience the gleam of cheerfulness. The courteous person brings good cheer

with him, smiles attend and follow him, and the service which he renders to society is the inestimable boon of changing all that he touches to the true gold which shines with happiness. Thus St. Francis of Assisi spoke of the divine bounty whereby the rain falls on the just and on the unjust, and the sun shines on the evil and on the good, as "the great courtesy of God." For courtesy is without calculation, and is dispensed, like the heat of the fire, from its own interior warmth. Obedience is a virtue like the vegetables, but courtesy is a grace like the flowers. It makes life brighter and pleasanter. It affects the day like the shining of the sun. It is in accord with the good looks of all young children; for they commonly begin good-looking, till somehow, by reason of our training or the lack of training, they lose that bloom of the cheeks and that light of the eyes which they brought from heaven. The presence of courtesy makes all people akin in the sympathy of honest pleasure,

like the sight of a natural, human, smiling child.

Lessons in courtesy begin with manners at the table, with the salutations of the day, with the acknowledgment of thankfulness, and go on through all sorts of consideration and unselfish effacement and self-sacrifice to the very heights of prayer and praise. For religion, on its finer side, is the true courtesy of man towards God. Courtesy expresses our recognition of the presence of others, and is at its highest as the expression of our consciousness of the presence of God. The practice of it affects the speech of children, so that they know better than to bring into their conversation with their elders the natural carelessness with which they address their equals. Something fine and wholesome is lost when children speak boldly to their parents, without restraint, or evident respect. It is an offense against the proprieties, like wearing one's hat in the parlor. It levels those

social inequalities which dignify society like mountains and valleys.

The old prescription of duty,—“To love, honor and succor my father and mother; to honor and obey the civil authority; to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters,”—is a securing of the peace and happiness of life. We all have masters and betters, and we desire to be masters and betters ourselves to somebody, and the habit of courtesy provides that decent precedence which is necessary to all processions and to social progress, whereby some step aside for others, and are glad to do it.

Such courtesy becomes naturally a reverence for places of prayer, for holy books, for the exercises of devotion, for the name and presence of God. And leading thus into religion, it is nourished and strengthened by religion, which teaches people not to speak evil of dignities, and pronounces

a sentence in which human nature and divinity meet when it says, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Religion is the steady restraint and corrective of that self-conscious and impertinent childhood which is one of the most mortifying sights of our contemporary life. It makes children the delight and adornment of the quiet home. With it, they grow up into unselfish, considerate, helpful and courteous men and women.

A final and supreme result of the training of children in religion is the spirit of service. For the love of our neighbor is the last of the moralities. The devout writers of many of the Psalms gloried in their hatred of their enemies. They accounted it even a virtue to hate them with a perfect hatred. And in all religious contentions, for the faith and for the church, even in modern times, good men have hated their brethren for the love of God. It is one of the elemental passions, and is re-

strained with difficulty even by the saints. When St. Paul said, "If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink," he revealed the spirit of service in triumph over this ancient sin of cruelty. The attainment of a right relation with our neighbor is not by intellectual effort, nor by compulsion of conscience, but by neighborly service. When we do something for him, in an honest endeavor to help him, we open the door of hospitality to all the graces of affection.

And this is true regarding the initial vice out of which all hatred grows, the vice of selfishness. When we say that children are "spoiled," this is what we mean. They are disobedient and discourteous, they are forth-putting and impertinent, because they are selfish. And we know that they are in a fair way to become not only bad Christians but bad citizens. The parents of the spoiled child are a peril to the state. They are preparing to send into the life of the

community a force as destructive as if they were teaching the child how to make dynamite. This is the material out of which are presently produced the manufacturer who is intent on making the mill pay regardless of the conditions under which the men work, and the merchant who sees no relation between wages and character, and the people in general who are willing to take dividends from methods of business which depreciate the human stock, and menace both the bodies and the souls of women and children. The spoiled child becomes the irresponsible mother, and the quarrelsome father, a poisoner of the domestic cup. Some of the pain of man has its origin in physical conditions, which we either cannot change, or have not yet learned how to change. But the greater part of the pain of human life is social, and proceeds straight from selfishness. The selfish child is already a nuisance, but he grows into a tragedy.

Unless we stop it. This is accomplished in part by the teaching of religion. The symbol of Christianity is the sign of self-sacrifice, the cross. The central idea of it is the love of Jesus Christ for us even to the giving of His life. For our sake, He made Himself poor, endured difficulties, faced all enmity, and suffered the shame and pain of crucifixion. The persistence of selfishness among good people, after all these Christian centuries, and in spite of the sermon in the pulpit and the cross on the spire, shows the hold of this vice on human nature. Even religion makes but a hard, slow fight against it. Nevertheless, the strength of victory is in religion. It is every day making selfish people less selfish, by the appeal of the cross. One plain thing that we can do against it in the family is to teach the self-sacrifice of Christ.

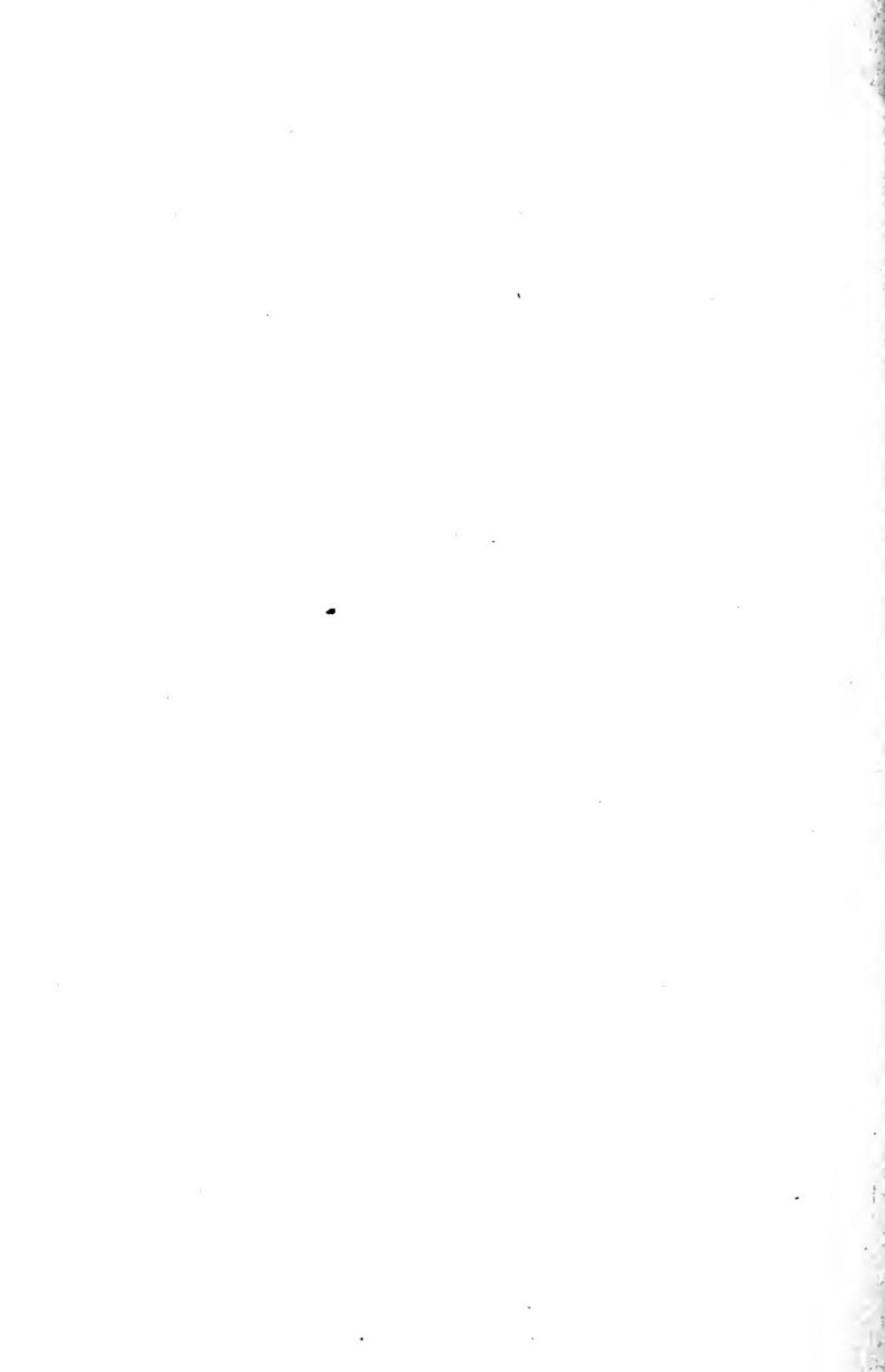
Another thing is to add to this teaching the active practice of religion. Children are to be made unselfish not only by admo-

nition but by application. The positive side of service is to be emphasized. The children are to be sent on errands of ministry; they are to do things for the happiness first of the household, then of the neighborhood. They are to be brought up with the idea that the sight of need is a call for ministry. They are to ask themselves in every company, "What can I do?" When they come home from some social assembly with injured feelings, and the complaint that they had a stupid time, the proper question is, "What contribution did you make? Whose happiness did you increase?" In the society of well-bred youth, every lad starts instinctively to fetch a needed chair. He does not wait to think. He has acquired the habit of service. To extend and magnify that, to carry it beyond the minor courtesies of life to all the needs of our neighbors, is to enter honestly into the practice of religion.

"Like as the arrows in the hand of a

The Good Child

giant, even so are the young children." It expresses the extensive and incalculable importance of the parental profession. Our work begins at home, but to its consequences there is no end or measure. Whoever in any humblest home trains up a child in the way he should go, not only secures the best happiness of the child but makes a golden contribution to all good causes. It is the most valuable work in the world. But its difficulty is in proportion to its value. They who are engaged in it need all possible assistance, especially the assistance of religion.



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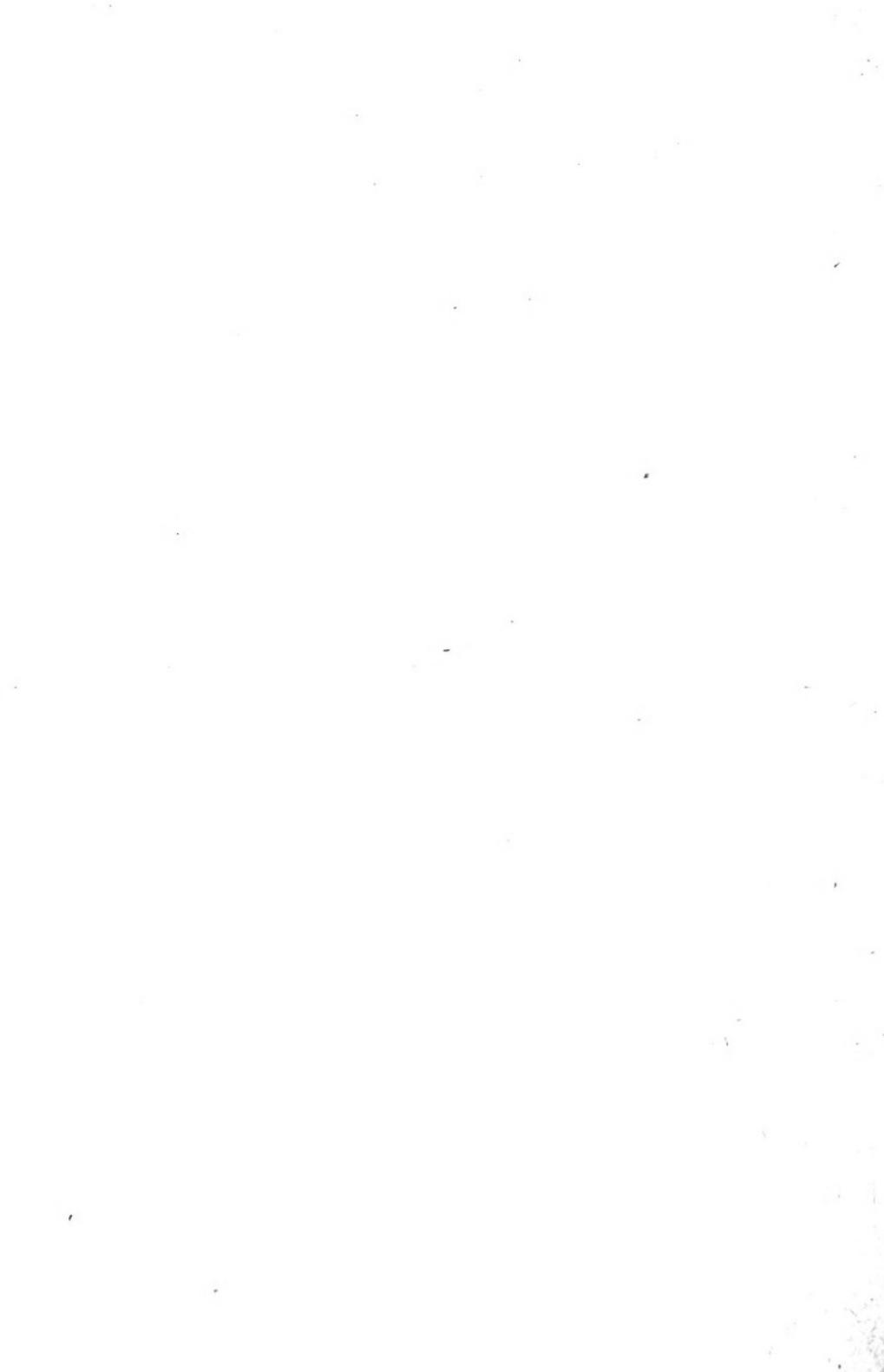
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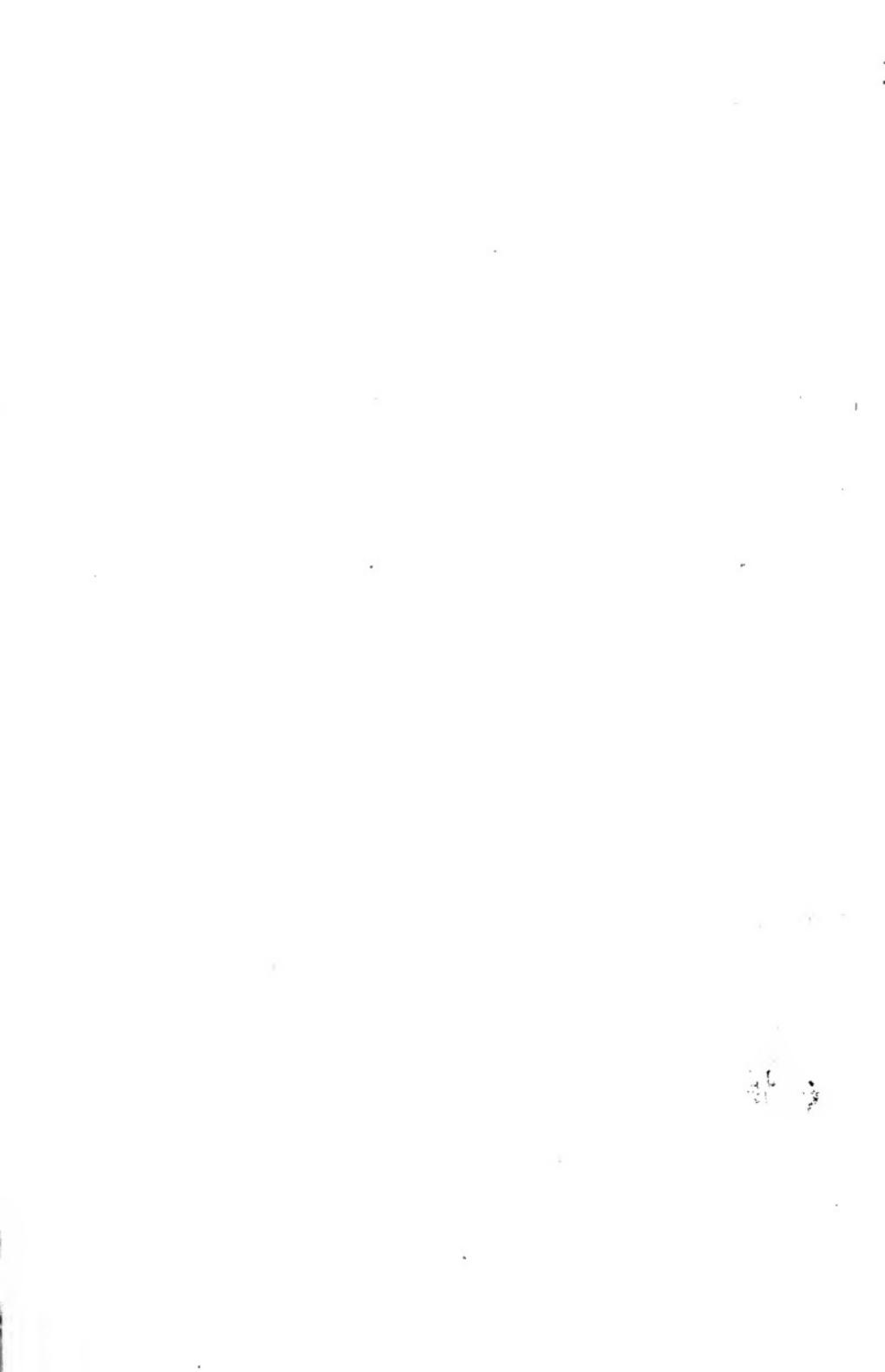
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